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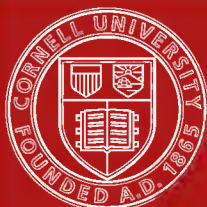
Reminiscences of Albert Pell.



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ALBERT PELL



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Albert Pike

THE
REMINISCENCES OF
ALBERT PELL

SOMETIME M.P. FOR SOUTH
LEICESTERSHIRE

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY
THOMAS MACKAY

WITH PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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P R E F A C E

THE autobiographical portion of this volume has been printed, with some abridgment and with a few verbal alterations and corrections, from Mr. Pell's own manuscript.

For the Introduction the Editor is responsible. His thanks are due to many who have helped him, more particularly to Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Pell of Wilburton Manor, Miss Emily Vaughan, the Hon. Emily Winn, and the Rev. William Bury for suggestions and anecdotes ; and to the Right Hon. James Bryce for leave to print the valuable appreciation of his friend which is appended to the Introduction. The Editor is well aware of the difficulty of describing, in adequate fashion, a personality so varied, so original, and so much beloved as was that of the subject of this memoir. He takes this opportunity of asking for the indulgence of Mr. Pell's many friends for the imperfections of the picture here portrayed.

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INTRODUCTION

THE memoirs which are here given to the public were written by Mr. Pell during the last years of his life. He has set at the head of them some words from a letter of Horace Walpole's—a strange source of inspiration for the bluff Anglo-Saxon strength of Mr. Pell's nature—but characteristic of the catholicity of his taste and reading. The quotation accurately describes the attitude of his old age towards the past. Those who had the privilege of enjoying Mr. Pell's friendship know what good company he was, and how original and racy his view of life. It is impossible, however, for the printed page to reproduce the inimitable manner of the man. Underneath a rugged exterior which sometimes would take the form of almost truculent ferocity towards a "nostrum" that he did not like (see p. 253) there was a vein of sentimental tenderness which would sometimes surprise even those who knew him best. The excuse for this preface must be that these aspects of his character and incidents in his life are not represented or told in his own memoir, and that some attempt to supplement the picture must be made, if the book is to be what it is intended—a memorial of a very original and interesting character.

Like those of many other good talkers, Mr. Pell's stories were not always told in the same way. The

main incidents never varied, but at each recital his memory seemed to bring up new and fresh details. The story, for instance (see p. 53), of that Bohemian night spent in the Green Park was a favourite which his friends liked to draw from the old man. The narration often made them wish that he had attempted the writing of fiction. His way of telling the story will compare not unfavourably with Borrow at his best. If the highest flight of imagination is not reached, it is because he felt himself confined by the uneventful nature of the episodes which he described, but there is in the narrative an abundance of humour and an entire absence of the vanity and egotism which detract somewhat from the pure enjoyment of the admirers of *Lavengro*. The suggestion in the text (see p. 54) that the drink might have been turpentine is new ; more usually it was the rotundity of the lady's person or the grease spots on her dress about which he would enlarge, as if he still saw them down all the long vista of years. These imaginative resources prevented Mr. Pell's stories from becoming "chestnuts." He had also a solemn way of repeating the sentence which contained the point of the story that was inimitable. After describing the horrors of his thirst, the person of the cup-bearer, and the appetising clearness of the fluid, he would add with a solemn shake of his head—"It was gin ! It was gin !" The story seemed never to pall, and if one of his hearers declared himself defrauded of an account of the aggravated horrors of a schoolboy's thirst that had been quenched with gin, these would be added with spirit and with the liveliest dramatic touches. It was indeed not so much the story as the way of telling it that amused. Lord Randolph Churchill's baiting of Mr. Gladstone has often

been described. Who but Mr. Pell however, from his coign of vantage on a back bench below the gangway, has ever thought of comparing the agitated muscles in the neck of the leader of the Fourth Party, when engaged in this historic pastime, to the quiverings in the neck of a fox terrier scratching a rabbit out of its hole ! The simile, however, brings the picture before us in a way that could not be attained by a more ambitious narrative.

Mr. Pell's connection with East London was a topic on which he often enlarged. There was an ancestral, and to some of us rather mythical, Pell whom he was fond of describing as standing in the mud at Wapping caulking a boat. "I can see him now," he would say—we believe the gentleman died many years before Mr. Pell was born; but when his imagination was once fired, Mr. Pell was no chronologer—"he was dressed in white corduroy breeches which he hitched with his tarry thumbs—but it was good tar that he used, and it was a seaworthy boat" (*bis*). This story was usually told to explain his very genuine love of the East End, and as a prelude to accounts of strange visits to Jamrach's and Chinese opium dens.

Mr. Albert Julian Pell, his nephew, tells me that an ancestral Pell was a boat-builder on the Thames, who possessed, it is piously believed, all the virtues attributed to him by his descendant. He claimed also as his ancestor a Kentish Pell, whose near approach to the gallows for his concern in Jack Cade's rebellion was a bit of family history in which his descendant took a humorous pride. Mr. Pell's grandfather lived on terms of friendship with a German immigrant whose Christian name was Albert, a name unusual in England before the days of our own

Prince Consort. This name was borne both by Mr. Pell and his father, and the circumstance was often mentioned by Mr. Pell as the reason of his regard for the alien settlers in the East End. The Jew-baiting of these later days aroused his anger and contempt. He spoke of gratitude, but of the precise nature of the obligation of the family to this German friend I am not aware. Apart from this, Mr. Pell liked his Jewish tenants and neighbours. "The best tenant," he would say, "is a warehouse, or if you can't get that, a cart, but if it is to be human kind, a Jew is the best. They are industrious, law-abiding people, and they don't drink." The little black-eyed Jew children dancing to the strains of an organ in Pell Street filled him with delight, and he would describe, with a minuteness worthy of a dancing-master, the intricacies of their steps.

Mr. Pell's father, as he narrates, received the first rudiments of his education in Raine's School in St. George-in-the-East, an old foundation which is otherwise remarkable for a fund to provide dowries for a certain number of young women who have been educated in the school. The selection of brides takes place at intervals of a few years. The result is not very satisfactory, and in practice, so, at least, it is locally reported, has led to a sordid species of fortune-hunting and to a number of unhappy marriages.

Mr. Albert Pell senior, according to his son, had a hard struggle owing to narrow means. He was called to the Bar and went the Western Circuit. It was not etiquette for a barrister in those days to travel in a public conveyance. He might meet a solicitor! Mr. Pell could not, on his first circuit, afford to ride or to post, so he walked, and walked through the night, from

one assize town to another. He seems rapidly to have acquired a practice, largely, according to his son, owing to the prevalence of litigation about water-rights. Mr. Albert Pell senior in course of time became a Serjeant-at-law, and later a Judge in Bankruptcy, when he was also made a knight. He married comparatively late in life Margaret Letitia Matilda, daughter and co-heiress of Lord St. John of Bletsoe. The marriage trustees of this lady purchased and so brought into the family as part of her dower the manor of Wilburton, which Mr. Pell describes in more than one passage of these memoirs. At his mother's death Mr. Pell was already settled at Hazelbeech,* Northamptonshire, a house which he rented from his relative Sir Charles Isham, and which remained his home till his death; and he never lived permanently at Wilburton, which now descended to him in joint ownership with his two younger brothers.

The manor of Wilburton is still occupied by tenants holding and cultivating according to the custom and rules of the manor. The manor rolls have been preserved from the fourteenth century, all written on vellum, except for one short period when they are on paper, a parsimony which, together with its authors, Mr. Pell would at times vehemently anathematise. Mr. Pell was not a voluminous author, but he was fond of writing and could write graphically. His pamphlet on the *Making of the Land in England* (reprinted as an appendix to this volume) is an admirable exposition of a subject which he understood thoroughly. Much of the interest of this tract is given to it from his knowledge of the history of the Fen Drainage and the archaic forms of tenure which still survive there. The manorial books

* Hazelbeech is variously written Hazelbeach and as above.

of Wilburton have been a mine of information for historical and legal students; and they have been frequently quoted by the late Professor Maitland and other authorities on the subject.

In his memoir Mr. Pell records at some length what was probably the most important achievement of his political life, namely the successful agitation which, with others, he carried on till the Government was induced to take drastic measures with regard to the Cattle Plague 1866-8. This agitation carried him into Parliament, where he was always listened to as one who spoke with authority on questions of agriculture and local government. His great ally in the representation of the agricultural interest was Mr. Clare Sewell Read, member for Norfolk, and at one time Under-Secretary to the Local Government Board, between whom and Mr. Pell, notwithstanding many differences of opinion, there subsisted till Mr. Read's death the warmest feelings of friendship.

Mr. Pell has been heard to describe to the daughter of his old friend some of the incidents that befell them during a journey to the United States. There ran through it a refrain: "Oh! your father was good to me! He never was out of temper—and I was a terrible fellow in those days—I was not energetic, I was brutal, and having a steam engine somewhere about my person, I drove straight ahead, sparing neither age nor sex. I remember well——" and then came the detail which in Mr. Pell's conversation was always so delightful—"how ill I was with a touch of rheumatic fever on the way home. One morning your father came into my cabin with a very long face. I knew it was not the Psalms, we had read them together already—but oh, how good he was to me! 'Look here, Pell,' he said,

'of course you are ill, I know that ; but you have no business to be in such an infernal temper that even the able-bodied sailors are afraid to come within hail of you.' I am very thankful to think" (*bis*, and very impressively) "that I had the grace to say I was sorry ; and then, when he had reduced me to a proper state of contrition, your father went on—'Now you know, Pell, I hope you won't mind my speaking plainly, now I have caught you here in a repentant frame of mind. You are now suffering pain and are not quite well'—(here I groaned dismally)—'but what I would have you remember is that you are now in the condition in which many of us have to go through life, and it ought, my dear Pell, when you get well again, to make you more considerate of your weaker brethren.' Oh ! such a good lesson—such a good lesson ; but I am afraid, my dear, I never followed it very far."

Mr. Pell certainly was a redoubtable controversialist. He had argument, humour, pertinacity and great insight ; but he scorned tactics, and to attend a public meeting as advocate of an unpopular cause with Mr. Pell was a pastime which ensured some lively quarters of an hour. His courage and his loyalty never faltered, and though all his friends recognised in him a man with whom they would be ready to go tiger-hunting, he could not resist occasionally firing a charge of small-shot at the tail of a retreating tiger, in a way that gave rise to exciting but perhaps unnecessary scenes.

A sincere conviction led Mr. Pell to advocate a strict and careful administration of the Poor Law. It was a subject which lay nearer his heart than perhaps any other, and he has solemnly chronicled the intensity of his unchanged opinion in the epitaph which he wrote

for his own tombstone. Many of the stories which have come to my knowledge are connected with his work as a Poor Law reformer. This is not the place to go into the merits of the case,* and here the subject is introduced only for the purpose of illustrating Mr. Pell's character. Like many other old-fashioned people, he held strongly that children had a duty to their aged parents. The influence of the Poor Law admittedly has been to encourage children to neglect their natural duty in this respect. Legislation having led to this unnatural habit, it became necessary to attempt to check and control it, and laws have been passed to oblige children to perform duties toward their parents, a breach of which duties, except for the encouragement given by the law, they would never have thought of justifying. There are, however, people who defend this dereliction of duty, and who agitate for a repeal of the law which seeks to enforce it, and on one occasion Mr. Pell, who was known to take an interest in such subjects, was asked on the hustings by a heckler whether he was the man who in his place in Parliament had made the law obliging poor men to maintain their parents.

"No!" rapped out Mr. Pell in reply—"that is an older law. It was written by God Almighty on two tables of stone and brought down by Moses from Mount Sinai; and as far as I can make out, Thomas, it's the stone and not the law that has got into your heart." The abashed heckler got his answer, and for many a long day was known as "stony-hearted Thomas."

Mr. Pell was not one of those who suffered fools gladly, and the more outwardly decorous and respectable was the person in whom he detected symptoms of obnoxious folly,

* See, however, a letter printed in appendix.

the more indignant he grew and the more likely he was to descend like the proverbial hundred of bricks.

One class of philanthropists was particularly distasteful to him—namely those who exaggerate the squalor and poverty of the region in which they labour. Exaggerated statement on such subjects in most companies is allowed to pass without challenge, but Mr. Pell could rarely restrain himself. He was a member of the Royal Commission (Lord Aberdare's) on the Aged Poor. Before this body an amiable but foolish parson appeared, and asserted that people had been "done to death" in his parish by the neglect of the Guardians. The wearied commissioners, who had heard much similar language, and knew how much importance was to be attached to it, were probably only too anxious to send the reverend gentleman back to his flock. Not so Mr. Pell. "This is a very serious allegation," he said; "it must be examined." The witness, who probably had been in the habit of making such statements in magazine articles and charitable appeals, was challenged to give instances, and of course found it difficult to do so; but he mentioned one or two cases which he thought hard. Mr. Pell insisted on having the committee room cleared, the witness was told to go home and come again with his proofs, and the explanation of the Guardians was invited. On his second appearance the witness had to admit that no one had died, and that the only case for which a satisfactory explanation was not forthcoming happened ten years before, and there was no record of the circumstances. There are not many men who would have taken the trouble to hunt down the recklessness of this sort of evidence. If the example could have been set on a hill-top as a warning it might have been worth doing, but when all is to be buried in the

secret obscurity of a ponderous blue-book, a less strenuous character might have thought it waste of time and labour.

Sometimes, it is to be feared, Mr. Pell's impatience of what he considered foolish sentimentality got the better of strict propriety. A much-esteemed friend, than whom the most active imagination could never conjure up a figure more respectable, was urging in the witnesses' chair a policy of which Mr. Pell disapproved. The witness was asked how he could reconcile such a proposition with any reasonable view of laws human or divine. At last, thoroughly badgered, he rather weakly took refuge in the remark, "Well, it is what the Philanthropic Public wants." "Philanthropic public!" exclaimed his relentless cross-examiner, "who are the philanthropic public?" "Well, I mean," the answer came, "the people who go about doing good, you know." "What," said Mr. Pell, with more than bucolic bluntness, "you mean like a cow goes about doing good in a field." *Solvuntur risu tabulæ*. The witness then withdrew.

With regard to the Poor Law, there was in Mr. Pell's mind a certain *sæva indignatio*, warranted by his very clear vision of the suffering caused to the poor by weak-kneed sentimentalists, and accentuated by the consciousness that popular ignorance and popular prejudice made it very difficult to repair the mischief done by the Elizabethan enactment and all that has followed from it. This was, I think, the most engrossing idea in his mind. "Sound," in his vocabulary—and he would constantly ask about a stranger, "Is he sound?"—meant sound upon the Poor Law. He was not, except in this respect, a strong party man; his character was too independent. The best Poor Law administrators at the Central Office in his time, he used to say, were Liberals—

notably Lord Goschen and Mr. Stansfeld ; the worst, he would generally add, members of his own party. The political portion of his reminiscences is rather meagre ; only a few passages have been retained as specimens, and they hardly do justice to the author's power of description. He would, however, frequently talk about his political life. His views were very tolerant and catholic. He was a " pretty " fighter, but more for the love of the thing than from any conviction of the principles that are supposed to divide Conservatism and Liberalism.

In later life he grew a beard, which gave him a venerable appearance which his sentiments, freely expressed in downright Anglo-Saxon, sometimes belied ; but in earlier life he used to say he was a rather truculent-looking fellow. This hardly did justice to the twinkle which was rarely absent from his eye—but undoubtedly at times he had a determined air. On one occasion, when facing a hostile meeting, he was rewarded by overhearing a remark which pleased him greatly. A man in what he always called " the trough "—*i.e.* the place below the platform, generally reserved for reporters, remarked to his neighbour, " Look at his mouth, he'd bite a tenpenny nail in 'arf ! " A tribute which he greatly appreciated.

The things that remained in his memory were the humours of the game. The nearest approach to malevolence that I can call to mind, was his evident satisfaction in having dubbed a political opponent whose features and character (so Mr. Pell thought) gave point to the nick-name—" Tricky Noses." Trichinosis, it should be explained, was a mischievous disease among swine, then causing much anxiety to the legislative wisdom, and to Mr. Pell's agricultural allies in particular. For the

rest, Mr. Pell thoroughly enjoyed himself, and made friends with all sorts and conditions of men.

In his old age he became slightly deaf, and could not follow a public meeting. He declined, on one occasion, to speak for a local candidate, but he said, "I have got a fine churchyard cough, and if you like I will go and attend your opponent's meetings." The real truth is that he could get no political party to take any interest in his favourite subject of Poor Law reform, and the cheap electioneering which many persons in both parties carried on by way of lavish promises of pensions and backsheesh filled him with disgust. He was a strong Free Trader, and thought Mr. Chamberlain would ruin his party and his country, and Mr. Balfour's tactics were beyond him. Though all his life a Tory, his opinions were really rather those of an old-fashioned Liberal than of any modern species of politician. He disliked the great Whig family tradition, and this feeling, more than anything, kept him from straying far from the Tory fold. Unlike most men, as he grew older he grew more liberal, using the term in its literal sense; with that illogical hybrid the Socialist-Liberal he had no sympathy.

Of the great political leaders he was no blind worshipper, and his heroes were, I think, President Lincoln, Sir John Bennet Lawes, and one or two friends, men in an entirely private station in life, in whom affectionate partiality led him to recognise the elements of greatness.

Mr. Gladstone, oddly enough, seems to have been chiefly a source of amusement to him. His sturdy independence led him at times to be something of a thorn in the side of his own party, and it may be that Mr. Gladstone looked on him as a possible recruit. He

was fond of telling how on one occasion—possibly to be identified with one described in the text (p. 247)—Mr. Gladstone seated himself on a low chair at his feet and entered into conversation on a variety of subjects. “It was for all the world,” he would say, “like the Garden of Eden over again. There was I like Eve seated in her bower, with the Serpent at my feet.” The temptation, however, seems in this instance to have come from Eve, who unlike her prototype was quite equal to the occasion, for she managed somehow to deliver her soliloquy on the Poor Law, and to watch for an opportunity of recommending for preferment a “sound” clergyman, an opportunity which the wily one silently evaded.

For his own political chief he had a strong liking, though to the end Lord Beaconsfield was ever to him the amazing Premier. He admired especially Mr. Disraeli’s management of the party in the House of Commons, and he was fond of telling against himself two stories of how Disraeli good-humouredly could repress an over-officious private in the ranks of the party. On one occasion Mr. Pell voted against his party, and immediately after met his chief in the lobby and began to apologise for his breach of discipline, referring to his conscience, his principles, and his pledges to his constituents. Disraeli took him genially by the arm and said, “My dear Pell, it really isn’t of any consequence. Please do not worry yourself. I can assure you it doesn’t matter in the very slightest degree.” “Oh, such a lesson for a bumptious young politician!” the victim always remarked when he told of his discomfiture.

On another occasion, when on the subject of local taxation a motion by Mr. Pell had put the Liberal Ministry of the day in a difficulty, he was naturally in a state of

much elation, and wished his chief to follow up the advantage by some further action. He committed his point to writing and approached his leader, who sat with folded arms and head sunk on his chest, on the front Opposition bench. He raised his eyes, but Mr. Pell could see that he was not listening to his eager counsels, so he produced his paper, remarking, "I see, Sir, that your thoughts are occupied; but please put this in your pocket and look at it at your leisure." "My dear Pell," said the great man, "I never put anything in my pocket—but look here, you give it to Monty Corry; I believe he puts things in his pocket."

Mr. Pell could well afford to tell such stories against himself. His position in the party was so well assured that these witty pleasantries of his chief could pass without offence, and indeed no one appreciated them more than himself. Mr. Pell's reminiscences relating to this date are obviously compiled from old diaries, and though they record many interviews with Ministers and important persons, memory does not seem to have called up much beyond the mere fact. His bare chronicles have been, for this reason, excluded from the narrative here published, but his notes are sufficient to show that to Mr. Pell were conceded, as of right, a considerable place and influence in the councils of his party.

A distinguished public servant, Sir Robert Giffen, has remarked to me that Mr. Pell was a person with whom it was possible and a pleasure to do business. He writes: "I had a general idea that Mr. Pell was considered a character, but he never showed that side to me, and I had an intense respect for him as one of the most sensible public men I had come across. The special business which brought Mr. Pell to my office at the

Board of Trade was the corn average prices, . . . about which the farmers were very sore and there was much agitation. Mr. Pell was one of the few who understood our official point of view, and assisted materially in getting a new Bill quietly through Parliament which improved the machinery for taking the prices without altering their basis, which would have been rather a calamity statistically."

Although essentially an outdoor man, he was all his life a great reader. He records in his memoirs his first introduction to *Pickwick*, and he has told me that he made a point of reading *Pickwick* through once every year. He read it aloud with an enjoyment that was irresistibly infectious. The story of the bagman's uncle in *Pickwick* and the spitting of the Marquis of Filletoville like a cockchafer on the wall was an episode which afforded him immense delight.

The characters of Dickens seem to come from the world which he himself inhabited, for he had a marvellous capacity for picking up strange acquaintances. He also read many out-of-the-way books. Arthur Young and Cobbett were of course favourites, and he was always imploring his friends to read Olmsted, an American writer who was unknown to most of us.*

To those who did not know him Mr. Pell showed few signs of a sentimentalist, but on a closer acquaintance it would appear that there were causes and things which moved him deeply. The warmth with which he always

* *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, with Remarks on their Economy*, by Frederick Law Olmsted, author of *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England*, New York, 1856, a well-written and moderately expressed condemnation of slavery, dwelling mainly on the uneconomical results of slave labour and the exhaustion of the soil in the Southern States.

spoke of slavery in the Southern States surprised his younger friends, to whom the subject had become remote, and they felt inclined to ask, as did Hamlet of the player, "What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?" He had also a love of abstract truth for its own sake which found vent in emotion not often evoked by episodes of ancient history. I remember his taking down from his bookshelf a volume of Draper's *Intellectual Development of Europe*—not, one would say, a tear-provoking volume—and reading to me in a voice trembling with emotion a passage describing the fortitude of Galileo and his sufferings for the truth. Mr. Pell was, as all the world could see, a witty and entertaining companion, but there was in him also a great and tender humanity, and, what is perhaps rarer, a jealous love of justice and truth. This fact is a key to his character and to his humour, and explained his sometimes violent outbursts against what he conceived to be a false and shoddy type of philanthropy. A characteristic instance of these two sides to his character is perhaps worth recording. St. George-in-the-East Workhouse Infirmary is in the neighbourhood of the docks, and thither, in their sickness and misery, came the unfortunate women who frequented the low sailors' taverns and dancing-rooms. Mr. Pell was talking of this class one day, in the plain language which he always used. He spoke, however, in tones of tenderest compassion, and dwelt on their sufferings, their unknown temptations, their frequent kindness to one another, the unlimited mercy of God; and he described how in his visits to the infirmary he had seen these women on their deathbeds—how in death the riot and debauchery had vanished from their faces, and revealed again traces of their original beauty and innocence, as they rested in the peace of death.

Then by some rapid transition his mind was diverted to thoughts of the uphill struggle he was carrying on against the mischievous laxity of Poor Law administration, and he broke out, "Ah! I do pity indeed those poor creatures—but as for those wretched humbugs who wish to relieve their feelings at the expense of the independence of the poor, and who chatter about 'deserving widows,'* I have no patience with them; besides, they are not deserving, they only have an unsatisfied craving for gin in their bellies." The argument, of course, takes nothing from the alleged appetite for gin characteristic of widows, but it is typical of the "bludgeonly" way he laid about him when his feelings were roused.

Notwithstanding his delicacy as a child, Mr. Pell enjoyed on the whole robust health. "Ah," he would say, "I have much to be thankful for. Once, about forty years ago, I had a headache, but otherwise I have had good health." His attitude towards doctors and nurses was subject of much amusement to them and to his friends. To one doctor who asked to have a second opinion, he firmly replied, "No; if you are going to kill me, you must do it on your own responsibility." To another who was presented in his private, not his professional capacity, he remarked, "I do not hold much by your profession; when I am ill I send for a lobster." He had some strange faith in the healing properties of a lobster which I confess I cannot explain (see also p. 315). When at the age of eighty-two, he underwent vaccination,

* This phrase, it should be explained, is a cant term in Poor Law controversy. A. and B. are alleged to have desert, and it is argued from this that it is necessary to set up a machinery for their relief which experience, in Mr. Pell's opinion, had proved to be most dangerous to the best interests of the poor as a class.

the officiating doctor had the temerity to ask after his general health. Mr. Pell glared at him. "General health?" he said, "I don't keep any general health!" On another occasion he was taken very ill in the Fens, and the local doctor was alarmed. "I made up my mind however, that I would not die just then, so they got a second doctor from Cambridge, and he backed me up. 'You people here,' the specialist said, 'are accustomed to parsons and labourers in the Fens, who when they have a pain curl up and die—but here's an English gentleman who has made up his mind that he is not going to die, and you will see he will get all right.'"

Much friendly chaff used to pass between him and some young ladies, his relations, who had taken up the profession of nursing. The scoldings that passed between them are best described by the old Scotch word "flyting"—the flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy, that famous bandying to and fro of ribald abuse between two of Scotland's greatest poets—all in the fine old English spirit of the prize ring, "before corruption crept in." The young ladies had been mercilessly teased, and when they issued their business card as certificated nurses, a copy was sent to Mr. Pell with a neat P.T.O. in the corner, and on the other side was the exhilarating legend, "Laying out a speciality." Mr. Pell was delighted with this fair knock-down blow, as the authors of what to the fastidious might seem a rather grisly joke well knew he would be. His love of fun and a pretty wit remained with him, to lighten the burden of sickness and old age, to the end. One of these ladies, between whom and himself relations were really most affectionate, came to see him when he was on his deathbed. "What," he said, "you here! Then I know my last hour's come!"

There is a fortitude which endures in grim silence, but of all God's gifts a sense of humour is surely one of the most gracious.

He had a very happy knack of inventing phrases, often in connection with animals and flowers. Thus of the bullfinch he always declared that its eye was rounder than a circle. A favourite pug's tail was so tightly curled that he could not keep his hind legs on the ground. How delightful also (see p. 13) is the zest with which he speaks of the scent of the chaffinch's nest as a joy which had haunted him from childhood to old age. Most enthusiastically, too, would he applaud the poet's success in choosing the right epithet for some familiar incident in the life of the fields. I remember, particularly, his delight over the "foraging" of the cawing rooks and the "peeping" of the field-mouse, and the "rustle of the reaped corn" in Keats's *Ode to Fancy*. In this connection I venture to ask the reader to turn to the passage on p. 89, which describes the old-fashioned English hay-making, in a way that shows that, though Mr. Pell made no pretence of authorship, when the subject came near his heart, he could write the English language with singular charm. For his own immediate circle also, for his friends and his servants, he had epithets which seemed as inevitably appropriate as the epithets of Homer. A servant who discovered Hazelbeeche on a dark night was known as Columbus; another, whose temper and appearance were fiery, was always spoken of as the Hyrcanian tiger; a dignified old farm labourer, much in favour with Mr. Pell, was the Roman Emperor; and a small child with keen brown eyes and a sharp nose was always known as the mouse. In questions of literature, as well as on

those of social and political interest, Mr. Pell's opinions were always independent, and his literary judgment was, as a rule, in conformity with that of the best masters of criticism ; but here, as elsewhere, it was always a voice and not an echo that proceeded from Mr. Pell.

On his prowess as a churchwarden Mr. Pell valued himself very much. If the parson was " sound " all went well, but if there was any doubt about the " soundness " of his opinions, he must often have prayed for a more conventional ally. About forms and ceremonies he was not exacting, though, on the whole, he was opposed, but by no means bitterly, to what he called Eastward Ho ! practices. On occasions when he had felt called on to make some tolerably pungent remarks on what he regarded as clerical backsliding in the matter of " soundness," he would add, " But mind you, I am not an irreligious man—I am a pupil of Dr. Arnold's, and if you want a churchwarden who knows his business, Albert Pell is your man."

Mr. Pell was a wise man and a philosopher, and did not talk much about his religious opinions. I heard him once startle a mild young curate by asking, " Do you think, sir, that, if the belief in hell-fire was abolished, we should have to increase the number of the police ? " What answer Mr. Pell would have given to the question I do not know. Some " wag " who was present suggested to him that the conduct of a certain President of the Local Government Board who was suspected of electioneering at the expense of the Poor Law should reconcile him to the sternest interpretations of Calvin on the subject ; but he would not be drawn. He had indeed no taste for theological controversy, and remained very close to the faith taught him in his childhood.



Albert Pell in Mr. Tubbs 1906

In later life, when he felt no longer able to undergo the labour of finding out for himself, he was pathetically deferential to the opinion of younger men, especially if, like Mr. Crowder and Mr. Bury, they had secured his confidence. He seemed to recognise also that modern methods of controversy had become milder than those affected by the school in which he had grown up, and I have heard him ejaculate an intention to pray to be saved from the sin of a too censorious mind. The religious aspect of his character that struck his friends most vividly was his humble attitude of thankfulness for the happiness which lay, as he seemed to think, within the reach of a cheerful and well-disciplined mind.

Mr. Pell was never a rich man, and had indeed legitimate reasons for practising economy. His friend Mr. Bryce used to say of him that he was the best practical economist he had ever met. Though he appreciated the aid given by science to farming, he was never a fancy farmer ; his friends used laughingly to assert that his farming profits arose largely out of his sparing use of washing and paint on his carts. His favourite conveyance was a funny old two-wheeled Yarmouth herring-cart, in which he always drove, not along the road, but across the fields. It was on this humble and familiar bier that his body was carried to its last resting-place in Hazelbeech churchyard.

He had strong views as to the duties of landlords. Land-owning was a business and ought to be scientifically studied, and he was brutally unsympathetic when invited to pity the sufferings of the poor landlord.

He was not one of those who went whining for protection on behalf of the industry in which he was engaged. On one occasion in the House of Commons, in reply to a de-

mand for Protection on the ground that the farmers were not making money, he remarked, 'Yes, the farmers are making a great deal of money; but it is taken from them by various people—by the bankers who finance them' (with a nod of his head towards a colleague who was head partner in a large country bank), "by the implement makers" (and here he glanced at Mr. Howard, partner in the great agricultural machinery firm), "and" (looking round the house as if he was searching for some one), "by the manure merchants. And so," he continued, "there is very little left for the farmer, and that little is further depleted by an impolitic system of local taxation which throws more than a fair share of burden on this important and struggling industry." An excellent argument which was none the less forcible because so humorously introduced.

His way of life was plain and homely, but, like the tar of the ancestral boat-builder, everything about him was good of its kind. He was very fond of animals, and generally had in the house or in the stable-yard a family of Persian cats and a number of pugs, of whom the most famous was Mr. Tubs, an intelligent and handsome pug who pathetically died on the day before his master. With another, Mr. Punch, he used to carry on conversations of a most amusing character, expressing through Mr. Punch's mouth the views of a pug-philosopher on many topics.

In early life, as he has narrated, Mr. Pell rarely travelled in cabs, but latterly at Torquay he found the hills too steep, and used to drive from the sea-level up to his house—for which journey he knew the right fare. Occasionally cabby, as is his way, grumbled. One bolder than the rest declared roundly that he'd be blowed if ever he drove

such a stingy old fossil again. "Oh yes, you will," said Mr. Pell with imperturbable good-humour. "I know your face well, and I shall always look out for you on the rank."

A few detached "Pelliana" are still to be recorded. Somehow Mr. Pell could say things which in any one else's mouth would have been resented as liberties. He had a genial way about him that deprived his hard sayings of any sting. A young man, a nephew of an old friend, was introduced to him one day. "I am glad to make your acquaintance," he said; "I knew your uncle well—he was a coarse fellow; not to put too fine a point upon it, he was a foul-mouthed fellow." Their host was somewhat alarmed as to how this unnecessarily plain speaking would be received. Happily the situation was one in which the most dutiful of nephews could not restrain his laughter. "I never knew my uncle," he said, "but I am afraid what you say is true, as every one tells me the same." The uncle indeed was an admirable and useful member of society, but he had in his younger days achieved, and no doubt merited, an outstanding reputation on a famous circuit which prided itself on the violence and range of its fancy swearing.

His unconventional frankness was not always so well received. Torquay is famous for its luncheon-parties, frequented by valetudinarians of both sexes. At one of these rather prim festivities Mr. Pell was asked by a blameless spinster lady of middle age, anxious to make conversation, what he thought of Mr. Chamberlain and Tariff Reform. The mantle of Dr. Johnson seems to have fallen on him, and he replied, I fear somewhat rudely, "Madam, what are you talking about? I am

an educated man, and I read ! ” and he calmly went on with his lunch, unconscious of the horrid bomb that he had exploded, for the genteel luncheon-parties of Torquay are, for the most part, favourable to Mr. Chamberlain.

Here perhaps should be inserted one of his last contributions to public controversy :

[FROM “THE TIMES,” *December 30, 1903.*]

FISCAL POLICY AND AGRICULTURE

To the Editor of “The Times”

SIR,—Though a Unionist Free Trader, I venture to ask to be allowed to offer in your columns a few remarks on the present controversy.

Old enough to have taken my lesson, with Bastiat in my hand, in the forties, when Disraeli, just returned for Shrewsbury, Peel, Cobden, Bright, Lord George Bentinck, and other heroes were engaged in the struggle out of which Free Trade emerged to become, apparently, the permanent policy of Great Britain, it is bewildering for me to hear in 1903 a startling command to beat a retreat from a bold buccaneer whose daring and intrepidity has won the hearts of applauding multitudes.

While distrusting him, one cannot but admire a genius at once so confident and self-reliant.

The Government, however, has, for our instruction, instituted an “Inquiry,” and by way of result the Board of Trade has supplied us with its invaluable report on British and foreign trade and industry and industrial conditions.

Though not myself engaged in trade or manufactures, its pages seem on that head to furnish no reasonable grounds for despondency ; and after having just spent 250 millions in war, some depression might surely be expected now and for some years to come.

There is a general opinion that our business methods are not always up to date, that there is much to learn in important as

well as in petty details, and that we may win our way better by their examination than by crouching behind protective duties.

But now may I add a word on the rural industries with which I have been concerned all my life ? Mr. Chamberlain has not yet addressed any large meeting in a purely arable district, but his "Plan" includes a small protective duty on foreign wheat and meat—a homœopathic tonic—to which is added the prospect of better times for the agriculturist from the reflected improvement in other industries ; and then "back to the land" is to be the order of the day. We do not yet know what the agricultural labourer has to say to this. For the present, this year at all events, there has been a general sufficiency of farm hands. The rural exodus has been from poor homes and low wages to the better employment and more exciting life of a town. The farmer paid all he could, but grain prices beat him, and after a cruel struggle he has had to give in and look for profits away from the barn door. Meanwhile the landlord's income in the shape of rents has come down at least 35 per cent., and in my own case on farm lands 50 per cent.

We have, however, passed through the valley and shadow of death ; but what sort of a resurrection does Mr. Chamberlain promise us ? Better not let his glittering picture of this future Elysium divert our attention from present business. There are reassuring features in the stock-yards and pastures, in dairy and poultry produce, in artificial manuring for grass land, in the acknowledged superiority of home-fed over foreign meat, in the residential value of land in favoured districts, in the rising value of rural land following the introduction of any flourishing manufactures with an increased population, and in other potentialities. These are not Jack o' Lanterns, they are real and tangible, if not very magnificent ; let us make the best of them. Meanwhile, at the present juncture it seems, I submit, unwise to shut our eyes and open our mouths in the expectancy of the "lead" which the Government promises to its followers.

Your obedient servant,

ALBERT PELL.

His hatred of humbug could not always be restrained, and a walk with Mr. Pell in a populous neighbourhood often involved his companions in some funny altercations. A milk-cart in Bournemouth bearing the inscription "under medical supervision" was an object which his friends had difficulty in getting him to pass without shying. At last one day he could bear it no longer, and he accosted the boy in charge with an air of great benevolence. "Are you under medical supervision, my poor boy?" "No, sir," answered the boy. "Is the pony under medical supervision?" "No, sir," still more cheerfully answered the boy. "Ah! I see, the milk is under medical supervision. Well! well! what infernal humbug it all is!" And the mystified little street crowd melted away, wondering what the strange old gentleman was talking about.

At a solemn meeting at the Mansion House Mr. Pell rose and interrupted a speaker, who in his opening sentences showed a disposition to talk nonsense, with an appeal to the Lord Mayor to announce the name and occupation of the speakers. "Is this gentleman, for instance, a guardian or an employer of labour, or is he only a Member of Parliament?"—a sally which was received with great delight by an audience which resented being addressed as if they were the groundlings in a corrupt constituency.

His ordinary conversation, too, was full of good things. Describing a little party arranged for an American friend, whose wit in the Wild West he had vastly enjoyed, to which some ladies and the Bishop of Peterborough (Magee) had been invited, he explained that his friend had not quite played up to his reputation. "You see," he said apologetically, "there were ladies present, and he

could not spit ; and there was the Bishop, and he could not swear ; so what was the poor man to do ? ”

But these stories of Mr. Pell, of his wit and his wisdom, of his roughness and his tenderness, must be brought to a close. To recall them has been to the compiler, and he trusts to the friends who have helped him, a labour of love. To those who were privileged to enjoy any intimacy with him, Mr. Pell's personality was a constant and varied source of refreshment ; and an affectionate memory of his brave and humorous spirit is a cherished possession with a large circle of friends.

The last scene of all, his funeral at Hazelbeeck, was characteristic of the man, and a few lines of description will not be out of place. His closing days were in keeping with his life. He had indeed warmed his hands at the fire of life. He was full of years, and the burden of his infirmities was beginning to press heavily on him. He recognised without repining that it was time for him to go, and those who loved him will not grudge him his release.

He died at Longwood, the house on the Vane Hill of Torquay, where for some years he had been in the habit of spending the winter. His body was carried home to Hazelbeeck, and laid to rest in the parish churchyard. For those who had visited the spot with Mr. Pell the place had a strange attraction. It was a favourite walk from Hazelbeeck, and the interest of the visit was increased by a sight of the memorial tablet erected by him to the memory of his wife. The lower portion of this tablet was boarded over, and, as we all knew, underneath was the epitaph which he had composed for himself. Mr. E. L. Godkin, a distinguished American, and editor of the *Nation*, a leading American journal, had visited

his friend Mr. Pell at Hazelbeech, and yielding to the fascination of this peaceful retreat had left directions that his body should here find its last resting-place. He too died at Torquay, and was buried in Hazelbeech churchyard, only a short time before his friend.

The funeral procession on April 12, 1907, walked across the fields to the parish church, following the body, which was borne on the old Yarmouth herring-cart—an incident which the mourners felt was characteristic of their departed friend. At Mr. Pell's expressed wish the service was read by the Rev. William Bury, rector of Harlestone and formerly rector of Hazelbeech, who for many years was chairman of the Brixworth Board of Guardians and Mr. Pell's firm ally and comrade in the work of Poor Law reform. The church was crowded by neighbours and by friends from a distance, all anxious to show their respect for the fine old English gentleman who had worked and fought among them—without envy—for so many years.

The end was appropriately marked by the unveiling of the epitaph, the subject of much natural curiosity. The whole runs as follows :

IN MEMORY OF
ELIZABETH BARBARA PELL,
PEOPLE'S CHURCHWARDEN OF THE PARISH OF HAZELBEACH,
ONLY DAUGHTER OF SIR HENRY HALFORD, BART.,
OF WISTON HALL, LEICESTERSHIRE.
BORN AUGUST 23, 1825,
GIFTED WITH A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING AND A STEADFAST CHARACTER,
HAPPY AND BELOVED IN THE PRACTICE OF HOME DUTIES,
INFORMED WITH THE LAW OF KINDNESS AND JUSTICE,
TRUSTED BY HER NEIGHBOURS AND COMPANIONS,
AND THE TENDER PROTECTOR OF GOD'S CREATURES,
SHE DIED JANUARY 16, 1894.

IN MEMORY OF HER HUSBAND
ALBERT PELL, OF WILBURTON MANOR, ESQUIRE,
ELDEST SON OF SIR ALBERT PELL, KNT., AND OF
HONBLE. MARGARET LETITIA MATILDA, DAUGHTER AND CO-HEIR
OF THE 12TH BARON ST. JOHN OF BLETSOE.
BORN MARCH 12, 1820,
EDUCATED UNDER DR. ARNOLD, AT RUGBY,
M.A. AND LL.D. OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,
M.P. FOR SOUTH LEICESTERSHIRE 1868-1885.
OF LONG EXPERIENCE AS A GUARDIAN OF
THE POOR IN LONDON AND IN THE COUNTRY, HE CONDEMNED
POOR LAW RELIEF AS INCONSISTENT WITH REAL BENEFICENCE
AND ADVERSE TO THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE POOR.
HONEST IN PURPOSE, FEARING NO MAN,
HE SERVED HIS GENERATION BY THE WILL OF GOD,
AND DIED APRIL 7, 1907.

MR. ALBERT PELL

AN APPRECIATION BY THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE JAMES BRYCE
HIS MAJESTY'S AMBASSADOR AT WASHINGTON

EVERY one who knew Mr. Albert Pell will be glad to hear that he has left an autobiography, however incomplete, for he was a man well worthy to be remembered. He had what is called a strong individuality. He was original, not so much in the sense of having a creative mind or an intellectually fertile mind as in his character and his view of life. His ideas, and indeed everything about him, were his own, and bore a distinctive stamp. His character stood out as something unlike what one

had met before or would meet again. He lived according to his own lights, went his own way, and though very sociable and fond of his friends, was as little turned aside from it by the opinion of his neighbours or by public opinion generally as a sensible and open-minded man, who is also free from conceit, well can be. He had a clear, straight vision of facts : always knew his own mind and took his own path, counted self-help as the basis of all the virtues, and inculcated it by precept as well as by example. The downrightness of his manner and the stringent consistency with which he carried out his views of the proper way of helping the poor, made him—to those who knew him but slightly—seem austere and almost grim. For the sentimental way of looking at things he had certainly a great aversion ; for vagueness and looseness of thought, some contempt ; for pretence, imposture, unreality, insincerity, an indignation which he did not attempt to conceal. But he was essentially a kind-hearted man and a true friend of the poor. His campaign of many years against Outdoor Relief, a work which occupied his time and engaged his interest more than anything else, was undertaken far more for what he deemed to be the good of the poor than it was for the reduction of the rates. He loathed waste, and loathed even more than waste the selfish, lazy heedlessness which relieved its own feelings and earned a little cheap popularity by giving away other people's money and calling it charity. Thus he came to be regarded, not indeed by those poor who knew him personally, or by his colleagues on the Board of Guardians of Brixworth Union, but by a considerable part of the country round as a hard, stern administrator, when he was really doing his utmost to give the poor a sense of independence, and

when, in point of fact, the poor of his Union were faring better under his bracing régime than were those of the laxer unions which lacked the courage or the painstaking diligence to follow his methods.

The genuine warmth of heart which endeared him to those who knew him was reinforced by an abounding sense of humour. He had an unusual gift for getting into the mind of farmers and labourers, and was full of anecdotes illustrating their ways of thinking and acting. The keen look of scrutiny and determination which his face usually wore was relieved by the brightest possible twinkle in his blue eyes—a twinkle which promised fun. The fun was sure to come. When he talked about the country, or indeed about his personal experiences anywhere, in travel or in Parliament, he had a way of seeing into the inner minds of the people which only the lover of mankind has. Nor was his humour cynical. He was always keen, sometimes perhaps a little too outspoken. He did not mince his censure, which he liked to deliver in a few strong words, repeated twice or thrice with increasing emphasis. But there was no malice in it, and it was usually directed, not against weakness, but against ignorance or folly or meanness, and most of all against pretence and humbug, which he thought particularly rife in the field of what is called charity.

He knew the life of the poor not only in Northamptonshire but in the East of London also, where he had some house property, and took a great interest in local administration. Many were the tales he told of his dealings with them there ; where I suspect he did not always act up to his own rigid principles of self-help. But he was primarily a man of the country, rural and even agricultural. Though the son of a London lawyer, educated at Rugby under

Arnold, and at Trinity College, Cambridge, he had, and, I think, liked to have, the air of a farmer. His figure and his dress, and his weather-beaten complexion, and his bluff manner, expressing himself shortly and plainly (though with a swiftness and point which were by no means bucolic), added to the impression. He did not, however, show any fondness for field sports—at least, during the last thirty years of his life, when I knew him. In everything relating to agriculture his interest was inexhaustible. No one followed the progress of science in its application to the land with closer attention; no one was more eager to see a proper system of educational preparation for the agriculturist's life set on foot; while all that pertained to the history of the English land system, manors, and common fields, and so forth, was equally to his taste.

Though he sat for a good while in the House of Commons and kept always in touch with public affairs, he was not an ardent politician, and no more of a party man than his sense of party loyalty required. His political opinions might have been described as half Tory, half Radical. It seemed an odd blend; though "blend" is not the right term, for the Tory views and the Radical views were not mixed to make what used to be called a Liberal Conservative, but remained distinct, leaving him Tory in some points, a Radical in others. Yet why should we be surprised at finding a man of independent and vigorous mind taking from the doctrines of both parties what he found best? It is only the want of initiative and the want of thought among most men that makes the phenomenon seem rare. Sensible Conservatives know how much force and truth there is in many of the views commonly ticketed as Liberal. Sensible

Liberals feel the need for caution, and for regard to custom and tradition in politics ; nor do they fail to perceive the hollowness of some of the cries repeated by the unthinking members of their party, who fancy that abstract phrases can solve concrete problems. Albert Pell had a clear intellect, which cared nothing for party phrases or formulas. He had no fear of change, and had a genuine sympathy with the masses of the people. He was impatient of inefficiency. He wanted to see things pulled straight and existing evils cured. On this side, then, he was a Radical. But his early associations and his connection with the landed interest had taken him into the Tory party ; his doubts as to the policy of Disestablishment, and his contempt for what he would have called ignorant agitation and empty catch-words kept him on that side, with which he was, till Protection came to the front, in pretty close sympathy. But he was an impartially unsparing critic of both parties. He did not like the Whiggism of the great houses, though for his neighbour Lord Spencer he had the warmest respect and regard ; yet that never brought him nearer to the Tory gentry, in whose attitude in matters of local government he found little to praise. His own political interests lay chiefly in questions affecting the land and in economic questions generally. As I have already said, upon all Poor Law matters he was a Whig of the highest economic orthodoxy, going rather beyond the famous Poor Law Commission Report of 1834, in his aversion to outdoor relief, and scouting all proposals for Old Age Pensions. So, too, he was a convinced Free Trader, who made no reserves at all from Cobdenite principles. His friends found it hard to resist the temptation of mentioning in his presence the leaders of the new movement towards

Protection, such a thunderclap of denunciation was sure to break from his lips.

Albert Pell did not seem to have had any political ambitions, nor, indeed, did one discover in him any desire for fame or power. His life contented him. He was fond of travel. I once crossed Western America in his company and that of a large party. He enlivened everything and enjoyed everything and kept everybody alive by his humorous quips and sallies. He loved books, and read all the time when he was not walking round his farm. Besides economics, he seemed chiefly to enjoy biography, and the biographies of men who had *lived* rather than of those who had thought or written. Human character had a supreme interest for him. Abraham Lincoln was the hero to whom he most often referred as the type he admired. He knew the British poets, but did not talk much of them—most, I think, of Robert Burns, in whom he found the humour and the directness of expression and the sense of actual life in which he delighted. His own style, like his talk, was individual and racy. In every letter there was sure to be something fresh and graphic, some touch of humour which could have come from no one else in that particular way. He relished a joke against himself, and told me gleefully of the epitaph a friend proposed for him :

Here lies Albert Pell.
Relief at last.

Besides books and the study of rural mankind, his third great source of joy was in Nature. He loved his own landscape round Hazelbeech, and used to sit in the front of his house and gaze with a satisfaction that never

cloyed at the beautiful view which spread itself out beneath : green hills, with woods here and there covering their sides, and, beyond, a broad valley gently sloping to the south towards Northampton, whose houses were just discernible some ten miles away. This was what kept him living in the house after he had ceased to work the farm attached to it, for the view is perhaps the most admirable, in a sort of tranquil grace of line and harmony of colour, that one can find in all the country round, a country which few, except the fox-hunters of the Pytchley, ever traverse, and which those sons of Nimrod do not see when it is at its best, for its sweetest charm is a summer charm, and lies in the profusion of roses in the hedgerows and long the lanes.

Much as he enjoyed this quiet Midland scenery, it did not give him quite enough stimulus to carry him through the year, so every June he went to the Lake Country and spent some weeks in Borrowdale, whose hills and rocks he loved beyond all others. It was part of him to like to come to the same place year after year. He held Borrowdale to be the most beautiful place anywhere, and desired no better than to be in it again. His love of Nature included both the dumb creatures and the flowers ; and his piety, deep and true, but seldom expressed in words, took most often the form of gratitude for the bounties and beauties in which he recognised the goodness of God.

He was a philosopher, if ever there was one—a philosopher not of the speculative type, but of the practical, which applies philosophy to life and shows its faith by its works. He saw everything in the daylight, himself included, had no conceit and no illusions, went his own way and pleased himself, yet so pleased himself as to be

always regardful of others. He was a Stoic in bearing sickness and old age and such griefs as came upon him, the greatest of which was the death of his wife, with whom he had lived in unclouded happiness for many years. He was serene in old age, not repining at the decline of physical activity and the deafness which had come upon him—his mental powers remained clear and strong as ever—and managing to get pleasure out of the simple and long-familiar surroundings of his home. There was no moroseness, nor, though many things happened which he did not approve, and Brixworth Union fell away under new administrators from what he deemed its place of pride and honour, did he ever seem to yield to senile pessimism. If it be characteristic of a philosopher to see things as they are, to know one's own strength and one's own limitations, to adapt life to environment, to derive satisfaction from what one has and refrain from complaints that one has no more, these philosophic traits were his. Nor did his stoicism make him a less constant and affectionate friend, or ever reduce his genial and humorous interest in his fellow-men.

The following comment from the *Northampton Mercury*, April 12, 1907, is so admirable and so justly appreciative that it is reproduced *in extenso*. It is written evidently by one who knew his subject well, and gives pleasing evidence of the homage that is paid to a strong, resolute, and honest character. As a local tribute written from among those who must occasionally have been buffeted and trampled on by Mr. Pell's reforming zeal the article is most interesting.

MR. ALBERT PELL.

HONEST IN PURPOSE, FEARING NO MAN, HE
SERVED HIS GENERATION BY THE WILL OF GOD.

THE above lines are a portion of the epitaph upon his memorial tablet in the south aisle of Hazelbeece Church written and erected by Mr. Albert Pell, whose lamented death removes from the scene of his earthly labours one of the great men the county of Northamptonshire has owned. In this one sentence Mr. Pell, at the ripe age of eighty, summed up with masterly judgment his life and character. His greatest admirer would claim for him nothing more ; his warmest opponent would subscribe to nothing less. In three phrases there are laid bare his whole work and disposition. There is not a word out of place, not a suggestion that is in the least exaggerated. His three great characteristics since early manhood were honesty of purpose, fearlessness of public opinion, and earnest endeavour for the good of others. The one foible of his character, if it be such, is also as plainly published in the above epitaph as if it were also incised in the enduring stone—a supreme confidence in the wisdom and righteousness of his thoughts and acts. When he wrote that he served his generation by the will of God, Mr. Pell meant more than the phrase “Divine Permission” which appears in legal documents describing the Bishop of the Diocese ; he meant more even than the “Divine Providence” under which the Archbishop rules the Province of Canterbury—he meant “Divine Approval.” Mr. Pell believed that he was right, and a clear conscience was to him a guarantee of wisdom as well as righteousness. There was no false pride with Mr. Pell, and no false humility. No one ever passed more accurate judgment upon himself than did the squire of Hazelbeece when he wrote his epitaph over the grave of his beloved wife. Mr. Pell’s training, from the time he left his parental roof for Rugby, was all towards the formation of strength of character—towards the growth of a certain wilfulness of disposition which comes of great experience and deep religious piety. The son of sternly Christian parents both of consummate ability and knowledge ; bred among intellectual giants of the pre-Victorian era ; schooled under the

greatest tutor of the nineteenth century; the weak stripling, the trial of his mother, the caressed of his sister, the hope of his father, discovered his feet one day when he found his London rooms in the possession of a stranger. He turned at once from Law to Agriculture, and at a small farm near Harrow he applied in Middlesex those high principles which a succession of tutors, ending with Arnold of Rugby, had inculcated into his receptive mind. For young Pell had a wonderful gift of retaining and assimilating information. What he heard he knew, and what he knew he could always turn to practical account when the occasion arose. Just as agriculture gained him because of a trivial incident in Great Russell Street, so the unfortunate insane had in him the staunchest friend because when a boy he saw an idiot lad chained to an iron rod in the workhouse. The boy, who was brought to his senses by the kicks of his Rugby schoolfellows, grew to be a man who needed no other incentive than a right cause. It was the very righteousness of his position in all things that caused him just to miss the completest success and the greatest popular approval. He considered that what was right and best should so commend itself by those qualities, that no adventitious aids were needed. To be persuasive, to induce the acceptance of what was wise, occurred to him less and less as life advanced. Usually Mr. Pell was right in his views; at times they were advanced and enforced in a way that made others think he was unsympathetic and perverse. And yet he not only was usually right, he was usually triumphant; but it was a triumph won by sheer force of power and not by the arts of debate and devices of persuasion. He had a remarkable intuition, almost the seer's vision, on the ultimate result of a given line of action. More than thirty years ago, in the prosperous seventies, he predicted the great exodus, since experienced, from the village to the town. "Who," he asked, "would prefer to live in a badly lighted village, with almost no means of social recreation, and few, if any, opportunities for members of their families obtaining employment or learning a trade, when they could have all those advantages in a town like Leicester?" We have heard him deplore the shocking waste in the present sewerage system, by which nutriment meant for the land is wasted either on a special farm or pumped into the sea. China supported her teeming

millions, he contended, mainly because there was no prodigal waste there of that sort. He was against waste everywhere, and nowhere more than in the administration of the Poor Law. Outdoor relief was, he believed, an exceedingly wasteful system—wasteful in money and wasteful in character. He was one of the foremost when the railway was made in his district in persuading the navvies to save their money instead of spending it at the canteen. He deplored the waste resulting from the policy of allowing the canals and other waterways of the country to become unused; and like Mr. Gladstone, whom he admired sometimes, whilst Mr. Gladstone admired him always, he was a firm believer in fruit growing, *petite* culture, and poultry raising. Although an owner of more than a thousand acres in the Isle of Ely, he always held that landlords did not fairly meet tenants in the matter of rent when agricultural depression set in. He wanted many agrarian reforms, from improvement in land tenures and the incidence of taxation to better market arrangements and legislation respecting boundary fences. With it all he was an earnest advocate of scientific farming and the scientific education of farmers. His Homeric largeness on land and other matters, moreover, kept him a sturdy Free Trader from first to last. Protection he never believed in, and he never would though he lived to be as old as Methuselah. In December of 1903 he wrote an invaluable letter to *The Times* upon this question; and Mr. Pell possessed among his many abilities a real literary gift. The appreciative account of the late Lady Isham that he penned for these columns on that lady's lamented death in 1898 contained passages worthy of a place with gems of English literature. As a student who had watched "Disraeli, Peel, Cobden, Bright, Lord George Bentinck, and other heroes engaged in the struggle out of which Free Trade emerged, to become, apparently, the permanent policy of Great Britain," it was bewildering to find in 1903 a startling command from a bold buccaneer (Mr. Chamberlain) to beat a retreat. As was his wont, incisively Mr. Pell went to the root of the matter: "after having just spent 250 millions in war some depression might surely be expected now and for some years to come." A small Protective duty he scornfully described as "a homœopathic tonic," and above all things Mr. Pell was an allopath,

Agriculture had been depressed—his rents had come down fifty per cent.—but improvement was already visible. “We have passed through the valley of the shadow of death, but what sort of a resurrection does Mr. Chamberlain promise us? Better not let his glittering picture of this future Elysium divert our attention from present business. There are reassuring features in the stockyards and pastures, in dairy and poultry produce, in artificial manuring for grass land, in the acknowledged superiority of home-fed over foreign meat, in the residential value of land in favoured districts, in the rising value of rural land following the introduction of any flourishing manufactures with an increased population, and in other potentialities. These are not Jack o’ Lanterns, they are real and tangible, if not very magnificent; let us make the best of them.” And there we may leave it. We commend to all politicians the remembrance that Northamptonshire’s great Conservative agriculturist, he whose long life had been spent in the study and practice of agriculture, whose knowledge of farming was not excelled by half a dozen living men in the country, was convinced by his wide experience and intimate acquaintance with the subject, that Protection is baneful to the community and disastrous to the poor, and that for Great Britain, the policy of free ports was the wisest, the most humane, and most beneficial to her working millions.

THE REMINISCENCES OF ALBERT PELL

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE

I can sit and amuse myself with my own memory, and yet find new stores at every audience that I give to it.—H. WALPOLE, *Letters*, 2343, Cunningham.

BORN in 1820, now over eighty-six years ago, time has carried me through many changes ; from tallow candles, snuffers, and rushlights to electric glare ; from the tinder-box and brimstone matches to lucifers ; from flint and steel fowlingpieces, with powder-flask, shot-belt, and wadding, to the breech-loader and cartridge ; from hackney coaches with straw on the bottom to hansom cabs with indiarubber mats and mirrors ; from pair-horse coaches between the Bank and Edgware Road to omnibuses and motor-cars ; from the hobby-horse to the bicycle ; from the Margate hoy and waterman's wherries to the excursion steamer, Thames tunnel, and tubes ; from Vauxhall Gardens to the Crystal Palace ; from the lions at the Tower and the elephant at Cross's Menagerie in the Strand to the Zoological Gardens at the Regent's Park ; from the twopenny postman and eightpenny letter to the halfpenny postcard and the telephone ; from the semaphore to the wire and the aerial Marconi ; from the seamstresses' fingers and thimble to the sewing machine ; from the heavy gold watch, fob, chain, and dangling seals to the compact repeater in the waistcoat pocket ; from

the sale of our wives to the Divorce Court ; from paving-stones to wood and asphalte ; from cesspools to sewers ; from the black gown to the surplice ; from Tate and Brady to Hymns, Ancient and Modern ; from the terrors of the surgeon's scalpel and the dentist's wrench to anæsthetic indifference and composure ; from inoculation to vaccination, and back again to the "conscientious" blockhead ; from the sightless socket to glass eyes to match ; from dabs of rouge to "beautiful for ever" ; from polite conversation to slang ; from the coat of many capes to the mackintosh ; from George IV. to Queen Victoria and King Edward VII. ; from Brown Bess to the Lee-Enfield ; from the line-of-battleship's broadside to the torpedo destroyer ; from the decrepit watchman, with lanthorn and rattle, bawling "Half-past one and a windy night," to the silent policeman and the dark lamp ; from Whitbread's drowsy pots to Bass's brisk bottles ; from the village stocks and cold cage to cells with the chill off ; from Hodge and the dungcart to artificials and attorneys-at-law ;¹ from pattens to gum-boots ; from the flail to the steam thresher ; from books and magazines to penny papers ; while the porters' knot and the warming-pan are now only curiosities, objects for municipal museums.

My grandfather was living in the reign of George I. George III. was alive in the year of my birth. I was at my mother's breast when Thistlewood, the Cato Street conspirator, was hanged, and more than a year old when the great Napoleon died at St. Helena.

On the very spot where the Great Western Railway engine-sheds first stood at Paddington I have killed a garden snake ; and within a mile of the Sudbury Station

¹ Mr. Pell had a theory that recent agricultural legislation had greatly increased the opportunities of the lawyers.

of the London & North-Western Railway I have shot the wild duck's flappers hatched in the brook near the Harrow Road. The lingering glamour of Jack Sheppard's audacity and crimes still made Willesden famous, and I trod with a beating heart the lane at Elstree, where Thurtell cut Weare's throat, looking almost breathless through the cottage window into the room where the accomplices made their supper of pork chops brought down from the Edgware Road by Thurtell in his gig, together with the doomed man and the spade. It was at Thurtell's trial that the cook, having been asked by the judge whether the supper was not postponed, promptly replied, "No, my lord, it were pork."

We lived at the edge of a great wood on the northern border of Middlesex with no neighbours within a mile save some of doubtful character, so the family blunderbuss was fired at night about once a fortnight, to announce that the household was armed, and a few mantraps and spring guns were "set" in the coverts, or at all events were declared to be so set, by notice boards warning evil-doers and trespassers to beware. From my nursery window in London I contemplated the back of Montagu House, dull, dirty, and gloomy beyond expression, where the sentries sadly paced to and fro, or surprised one by popping out of their sentry-boxes with the most startling alacrity. Not very far off, but quite in the country, as is shown by the name, Chalk Farm was still the scene of duels. The Red House at Battersea was reserved for pigeon shooting, Finchley Common and Hounslow Heath for footpads and highwaymen. My mother, when a girl, used to come to London for the season from Bedfordshire on horseback, with her sister; on these occasions they slept at Woburn Abbey in order to cross Finchley

Common before dusk, travelling with two well-armed mounted servants, one in front and one behind, as an escort. The plate, the linen, and the toilettes were conveyed to town in one of the estate wagons. A Scots lady whom I knew, and who died almost recently at a very great age, told me that when she moved from winter quarters at Dingwall to the family place on the West coast, a perfect cavalcade of Highland ponies and retainers was required. She mounted her pony and rode the distance, about sixty miles, in the day, with the plate jingling behind on another pony, along a wild rocky track in the woods overhanging Loch Maree. I have seen the track, still traceable. The ponies and their riders must have known their business well to get through with no bones broken.

I call to mind many things long abandoned, but once usual and natural—taking wine or pledging at table; nicking saddle-horses' tails that they might be carried high with an air of breeding, and close-docking the cart-horses' tail to a stump; the London cries; Captain Swing, and the very general burning of ricks; sheep-stealing and consequent hangings; turnpikes, church pews, and the formal smelling of the inside of the hat as a public act of adoration or ritual before joining in the Church service; general phlebotomy in the spring, and the child's dose of medicine before going to the seaside; prayers for fine weather and for rain, supposed to be efficacious agencies in agriculture; Bedlam and public hanging; Burking and garrotting; smothering for hydrophobia; night-caps with tassels; oysters, the best, at a shilling a score; ruffs and reeves at Wisbech Quarter Sessions dinners; and for songs, "I'd be a butterfly born in a bower," "Wear the green willow," "Turn about

and wheel about and jump, Jim Crow," "The last rose of summer," "Three jolly post-boys," "Sally in our alley," "I remember, I remember, how my childhood fledged by," "Polly, put the kettle on," with others whose echoes haunt the memory.

Leaving generalities, probably of little interest to most of those now living, I recall the domestic simplicity, the plainness, and, some might think, the hardness of my childhood. I was up in winter by candlelight; why so early I cannot conceive. I thought it unkind of my father and mother to remain comfortably in bed while I spent the first cold hours of the day in wandering about the rooms, and observing how the housemaids cleaned the grates (bright steel), polished the fire-irons, swept the carpets, using tea-leaves to lay the dust, dusted the furniture, and festooned the curtains. They wore mob caps, and their elbows were red. My godmother lived a few doors from us in London. The conscientious discharge of her responsibility has left no doubt in my mind that the abhorrences of those days were the Church Catechism and a horsehair sofa on which I was set to study and commit it to memory. At the end of a listless hour, if my repetition was faulty, I was set to learn by heart the page in the Book of Common Prayer which treats of the discovery of the Epact.¹ Oh, the cruelty of it! But I was waxing in strength if not in wisdom, and when the attempt was made to try my patience and memory with the Thirty-nine Articles, I rose in violent remonstrances and rebellion, and with the bolster of the horsehair sofa, standing on its scroll for vantage, crushed the

¹ Epact, a number indicating the excess of the solar above the lunar year. The Epact is, therefore, the number of days between the last new moon of the old year and the first day of January in the New Year.

new bonnet of the season and was handed over to the arm of the secular powers. It was painful, but I was freed.

Then came the "first school." I began with the Latin grammar at Kensington Gravel Pits. There was a very big boy whose ways I studied; there were medium-sized boys whose ways I avoided; and small boys some of whom I fought with varied, generally poor, success. I have no recollection of what I learnt from the master of the Academy, who ere long cut his throat; but as I went home on Saturdays at noon, and on my legs, I began my real education by converse with the world, trudging along the Bayswater Road and the by-streets leading to Cavendish Square, where I call to mind the pursuit of a pickpocket, a soldier's funeral with the firing party, a dancing bear, an impostor on the pavement in an epileptic fit, and a bull pursued by butchers. The establishment of credit with a woman at an orange-stall who also dealt in "hardbake," followed by seemingly insurmountable financial difficulties, caused some painful reflections; but I determined to pay my creditor in full, and succeeded, though never in after-life, when the amounts involved were vastly more serious, did the sense of embarrassment so sorely distress me. On Saturday afternoons I had liberty to go home till Monday morning. The house in London was in Harley Street. One object of interest on my route was in Cavendish Square—a family mansion almost completely concealed by a gloomy, dingy, high brick wall which surrounded it. Some virulent disorder, I think the cholera, was alarming the town, and I occasionally saw the twopenny postman fling his packet over the top of the high wall, being forbidden, for fear of infection, to hand them in to the porter.

When I went to my country home between Pinner and

Watford, I left the Bayswater Road (then lined on the north side with market gardens), and struck off at an angle for the Harrow Road, where, at the Red Lion, the Harrow coach would pick me up and carry me on. Opposite the Red Lion, in a field which stretched away till it was bounded on the north-east by the Paddington Canal, was a maze, a melancholy arrangement of sooty white-thorn hedges out of which I never saw a soul depart. I avoided it therefore, under the impression that extrication was an impossibility for any one who once ventured within its intricacies. On the road to Harrow near the village of Harlesden was a lane to the right, leading, according to the sign-post, to Willesden. I yearned to explore this lane, on the chance of its leading to the village cage from which Jack Sheppard made his historical escape. Footpads and cattle-stealers infested the highway, and the sight of the first mounted patrol before the days of the "bobbies" was very reassuring. In the spring, "buy a broom"-girls in German or Swiss costume paraded the streets with their brooms (some curled deal shavings fastened by wire at the end of a short handle), and strapping wenches brought on their heads huge baskets from Battersea filled with pottles of the most fragrant unbruised strawberries.

The polling for a Parliamentary election lasted for days, and riot and drunkenness accompanied its progress. My father, being an unflinching Liberal and a speaker of some note, was on such an occasion very much alive. I can well remember one such election. On the morning of the nomination my father and I breakfasted with the Byngs at No. 5, St. James's Square, and it was then, in the winter of 1826, as a very small boy that I had my first introduction to political strife at a Middlesex election.

The breakfast was by candlelight in a very fine room wonderfully bright with the flames of thick, yellow-wax candles. I was placed next the lady of the house, and opposite me was a dish of tempting fresh strawberries. I was surprised at this freak of nature, but lost no time in taking advantage of it. On coming out of the house to get into one of the carriages, of which there was a lengthy cavalcade in the square, I was nearly swept off the pavement by a ringing box on the ears from my father, who added that he would teach me "to eat everything set before me." That ear was warm for the rest of the day and seems to tingle now. It was a very cold drive down to Brentford, but it became interesting as we neared the scene of action. The boarded hustings were elevated on posts high above the seething mob. There was much noise, but no stone or egg throwing, for the mob, or non-electors, were all for Byng and his party, and we mounted the hustings unmolested. My father with Mr. Byng had to come to the front, and I was placed almost between his legs and immediately over a boarded balcony or trough filled with men equipped with pencils and paper. My father's speech concluded with a quotation from Shakespeare, and one of the reporters below, touching my projecting toe with his pencil, said, "Ask the gentleman where those verses come from." I did so, and my father said, "Tell the dunce they were written by a Mr. William Shakespeare."

Those were troubled times, great principles were at stake. My father's two closest friends were William Wilberforce and Dr. Adam Clarke, and Slavery, and Reform in Church and State, were the constant subjects of conversation at his table. Wilberforce used to stay

a night with him in the country, and on one of these visits my nurse told me that Mr. Wilberforce would come in a "glass coach." "Another Cinderella," I thought, and, thawing the cold frosty pane with my breath, I watched at the nursery window upstairs for this crystal turn-out, only to see the old statesman arrive at last in a dingy green conveyance with hardly any glass, not altogether unlike a bathing-machine. I came down after dinner to dessert, or possibly it may have been earlier in the meal, as the table-cloth was still on the table. Wilberforce was not sitting square to the table, but had one elbow on it, and the other hand was crumbling some overdone toast and making a fearful mess. The conversation between the two men was most animated. My mother was silent, and I sidled up against her and got an orange, but I felt a giant was in the room.

Not long after my father's marriage Wilberforce took my mother in to dinner, and among other things asked her what books she read. The answer was, "Hannah More." "Well," said Wilberforce, "I can tell you of something quite as interesting—your husband would perhaps say more so; it is a book I know he admires—'Tom Jones,' by Fielding." Some years after this, at Rugby, Dr. Arnold recommended my schoolfellow Arthur Stanley to read Smollett's "Humphry Clinker," telling him at the same time that it was a book he thought so well of that he had read it fifty times.¹ Stanley, writing to his mother, informed her that he had read the book the Doctor recommended, and thinks it will be very interesting to visit the places (no doubt the watering-places) of which an account is there given. The day

¹ The fact is recorded in a letter from Stanley to his home. See "Life of Dean Stanley," vol. i. p. 65.

has now gone by when so devout a man as the author of "Practical Christianity" would select "Tom Jones" as a novel for a lady, or so religious a headmaster as Thomas Arnold advise a boy on entering Rugby to take to "Humphry Clinker" for fiction. But has any novelist surpassed Fielding in the picture he gives of purity, constancy, and love in the beautiful person of Sophia Western? Certainly no one. And where would one find a more delightful character than in Smollett's Matthew Bramble, or a more vivid and amusing description of the ways and manners of the country and the "taste of the town" in the mid-eighteenth century than in his company?

Before parting with Wilberforce I have an incident in his life worth recording. Among my older friends was a doctor of medicine who was born in York and died some years ago in the midland counties at a good age. When he was an infant in arms, his nurse, attracted, as women will be, by a crowd, was swept by an election mob to the very foot of the York hustings at a famous contest for the county in which Wilberforce was one of the principal actors. With all the earnestness and vigour which distinguished him, he was pressing his beneficent views on the Abolition of Slavery. Carried away by the depth of his convictions and enthusiastic inspiration, he reached over the balcony, and snatching the baby from the arms of its astonished nurse, held it up over his head in the face of the people, exclaiming, "See this, and hear my prophecy. Before this child dies, there will not be a white man in the world owning a slave." My friend survived the Civil War in the United States, and virtually Wilberforce's prophecy was fulfilled.

Church service was a dreary affair. We were all mewed up in high, deal-panelled pews above which, when the congregation was seated, only the very crowns of the men's heads and the summits of the ladies' head-dresses could be seen. There was no organ or other instrument. The parish clerk—an object of detestation, for he was also the rate collector—was boxed in under the reading-desk, a stout old bald fellow with a florid face and a husky, powerful voice. I fancy I hear him now proclaiming “the morning hymn,” “Awake, my soul, and with the sun,” and then really leading the congregation. My younger brothers, though there was an interval of eighteen months in their ages, were both baptized at the same time, and, for some reason or other (it may have been a common practice), not in church, but in the library of my father's house; and I was startled by the elder of them, when mention was made during the service of Noah and his family having been mercifully saved from perishing by water, rising from his knees and announcing that he possessed a Noah's ark!

These were the days of the old Poor Law and the “roundsmen.”* Young as I was, their idleness and indifference struck me. They seemed all alike, no one better, no one worse than another, and gave the idea of being the victims of chronic fatigue. There was a gravel-pit on the estate, and our predecessor, who farmed the whole of it, employed the roundsmen whom the authorities imposed on him in raising gravel. As their unpunctuality was on a par with their indolence, he had one of his barrows larger than the others with a very indifferent wheel. The

* Under the old Poor Law, the parish authority allocated the “unemployed” to the different farmers in turn, for employment. Such labourers were termed roundsmen.

man who arrived last had to wheel this all day. Beggars and tramps were up and down the country in all directions. A neighbour gave, but not for nothing ; he was well aware that he could not decide whether the applicant was deserving or not, but industry, he knew, was distasteful and beneficial ; so keeping a bag of feathers in readiness, and going out on the common, he threw a handful in the air, with the remark that they must be all picked up and brought to him before he put his hand in his pocket.

For gipsies I had ever a great regard, as picturesque and mysterious. Their dogs seemed to be bad characters, not so their owners. By never avoiding them I hoped some day to fall in with the King of the Gipsies. Even in my old age I regret the way in which the police have thinned them out, and almost abolished them ; and I regard the operations of the Society for the Preservation of Commons as defective in not preserving these wanderers, who might at least have been inserted in the Wild Birds' Preservation Acts as equally, if not more, entitled to protection. At least, they should be allowed a close time during which no legal process should run against them. I always thought Landseer, with his aristocratic models for gillies and crofters, a poor painter in omitting these from his pictures, and Morland the better artist for making them his study. When Whittlesea Mere was bright with water, one family of gipsies made a living by capturing for collectors the "swallow tail," a very rare and beautiful butterfly that fluttered among its reeds and sedges, also the large copper butterfly equally rare. So it was in my young days ; but now all is gone—reeds, sedges, the glittering water, the butterflies, the gipsies, the bitterns, the

wild fowl, and in its place, as the result of an enormous and unprofitable outlay, a dreary flat of black arable land, with hardly a jack snipe to give it a charm and characteristic attraction.

My father's country house stood on high ground among some picturesque old Scotch firs, elms, and limes. On the north the boundary was a large wood, almost a forest; to the east were old enclosures well timbered; on the south-east the lawn and garden ran down to "our wood" of about forty or fifty acres; while on the south and south-west were the recent enclosures of the parish open field, each about ten acres square, and bare. His enclosures my father had planted, when he first bought the property, with sheltering plantations of fir and oak. These, being about twelve feet high, and dense with branches, formed my birds' nesting-ground. Every sixth tree seemed to be selected by some bird—black-bird, thrush, chaffinch, hedge-sparrow, or tom-tit—as a nursery. In "our wood" I searched and climbed for the eggs of the wood-pigeon, the jay, the magpie, the hawk, and carrion crow. In the old orchard I was sure to find the missel-thrush in the fork of a tree, and later on, in the smaller boughs, the goldfinch, for thistles abounded. I can never forget that these excursions at early hours were made delightfully pleasant by the fragrance of the wedge of home-made bread I carried in my hand, and the clean, almost aromatic smell of the new nest of the chaffinch. The latter remains for me, in my old age, to revive the dreams of my childhood, but the wholesome, life-giving fragrance of the home-made bread of 1827 is gone for ever. Rolling-mills, "Hungarian whites," baking-powder, and aerated preparations satisfy a generation who nowadays go in

for colour, or the unsatisfactory substitute of wholemeal or Hovis.

Looking south from our lawn, the dome of St. Paul's loomed up when the bank of smoke was lighter than usual. From this spot on one eventful night, in October 1834, I saw the Houses of Parliament in flames. In the west the towers of Windsor Castle awakened my historical imagination, stirred by Mrs. Trimmers' history; and to the north-east on a clear day I could make out the long, low roof and turrets of St. Alban's Abbey. In fact, I was living at a home remarkable for its lovely views and scenery. The observation of a child is very close, closer than that of an adult, and being constantly in the company of an elder sister (a born artist, in after-years an acquaintance and frequently the sketching companion—not a pupil—of David Cox and painting with him in the open air), the landscape in all its breadth and its minutest details was brought home to my heart and bosom.

For a neighbour we had an uncle whose place with rival views joined my father's. He was a judge, a handsome, heavy man, with a countenance that somehow or another seemed to associate him with sentences of death and Jack Ketch. He had a nice pair of cobs, and was fond of trying horse cases. While a King's Serjeant he would, when engaged in one of these cases, if it made for his client, have the horse in dispute, possibly a glandered or worthless screw, near the court, and get his verdict by taking the jury to view it.

The flora of the district was not remarkable, but included the single wild daffodil, or Lent lily, which, in March, made the edges of "our wood" beautiful with its great patches of blossom. It took my boyish fancy be-

yond measure, and one of the distresses of my school life was absence from home when it was in its glory. In fact, it was not until I was eighteen that I renewed my acquaintance with its lovely presence.

The village of Pinner was a picturesque one, the houses placed on either side of a road straggling up hill to the church at the top, flanked by the butcher's old-fashioned, tiled premises, shaded by a grand pollard elm. Opposite to this, but a hundred yards away, standing on a well-cropped "green," was the house of the churchwarden, behind which was the trim but substantial ricks of one of the best of the Middlesex hay farmers; while on Sunday in front stood two or three carts loaded, with their cloths on, ready to start at night for the London market. At the bottom of the village, running at right angles to the "street," was a slow, muddy stream, on the other side of which was the Workhouse, approached by a plank bridge on its gloomy north side. Thither I was taken on many a Sunday morning by my indignant father, who immediately hastened through the hall to a door on the south side opening on to a walk that bordered the whole length of the building. Along this walk stretched for some yards an iron rod, fastened to the wall at either end. On this rod ran an iron ring, with a short chain and shackle. To this shackle the village idiot was fastened by his ankle, and so, passing from right to left and left to right in the blazing sun or the bitter wind, took his exercise and wore away his life. Placing me for a minute or so in front of this exhibition, my father, in a very solemn tone, said, "This sort of thing must be altered. If it is not done in my lifetime, mind you help to do it in yours."

I lived to be for seventeen years a member of the Metro-

politan Asylums Board, where we had these miseries in our humane charge. My father had been for some time exerting himself as an active Middlesex magistrate on behalf of lunatics ; their treatment at that time was simply horrible. He lived to see his views carried out and to take a leading part in the establishment of the asylum at Hanwell, the first public asylum, I imagine, in which the unhappy inmates were treated with humane consideration. When the building at last was completed and opened for patients, we visited it together frequently—my first acquaintance, as a boy, with the insane. I did not like these excursions, never feeling safe even with the warders. During one visit a poor creature, trusted to assist in the kitchen, plunged his head into a copper of boiling soup. Another, apparently perfect in his senses, used to appeal to my father for his discharge. He had been convicted of shooting with a pistol at Mr. Harris, the optician, in Great Russell Street, but escaped punishment (the gallows, probably, in those days) on the plea of insanity, and so came into Hanwell. The doctors, on full consideration of his case, sanctioned his discharge ; whereupon he lost no time in finding his way to Bloomsbury and having another shot, again a bad one, at Mr. Harris.

At the time of Quarter Sessions, held at Clerkenwell Sessions House, I accompanied my father to London. My nurse's brother was the principal turnkey in Newgate Prison, and, for want of a better way of keeping me out of mischief, the carriage dropped me at the door of the prison, where Mr. Brown received me as a visitor with much civility. I felt safer here than at Hanwell. The first thing I observed was the remarkable absence of wall papers ; instead, the dull surfaces of dark stone were relieved, in the officers' quarters, with the brightest of white-

wash. The hand-cuffs, gyves, and long shackles for the legs, beautifully scoured up, almost mesmerised me as I stared at them, arrayed in loops on the wall. Everything seemed very cramped in the building, the passages ever so narrow, while the yards were duplicates in pattern and dimensions of Daniel's lions' den as depicted in a woodcut in my schoolroom. I was given a book and a chair in the room garnished with the manacles, and in time Mr. Brown came to "take me round." I took very little interest in the prisoners. They were a duller set than the maniacs. Even the spectacle (a common one then) of the condemned who were to be hanged next Monday produced no serious emotion, and I cannot call to mind the features of any one of them ; there were so many in those days in that plight. What did stir me was the chapel. As far as I remember, it was on the plan of a theatre. On the stage were the seats of the officials, in the centre the chaplain's desk, on either side of it two or more recesses in which were placed, upright, the open coffins of those awaiting execution. (Am I dreaming this ?) In the semi-circle opposite was seated the crowd of prisoners. Those condemned to death took no part in the service. In the passages under the flag-stones lay buried the fruit of the gallows. Mr. Brown was very kind to me, but there was a feeling of restraint accompanying his presence from which I was glad to escape, and the drive home, twelve miles, afterwards was particularly refreshing.

There were some very kind and charming neighbours at a country house near the village. The family was remarkable for classical and historical talent ; and in their drawing-room I was privileged to scan the features and listen to the words of one or two authors of note and

of a day then almost gone. Of these, Mrs. Opie was one, the primmest old lady of all those I had in reverence, a daughter of the talented house of Alderson. I see her now, in the neatest possible cap and shawl, sitting very upright and rather silent. Mrs. Trollope, the mother of Anthony Trollope, was another—not at all prim, neat, or silent. I was not of an age to appreciate their society or to take advantage from it. I only used my eyes and ears on these occasions. I liked, however, playing bowls with Judge Alderson. The news of the death of Dr. Arnold came to us both in the middle of a game. I don't know which retired the sadder, the judge or myself.

At home I was constantly reminded of the dearth of articles of food and drink. The tea-caddy was kept locked up and the keys in my mother's pocket. Green tea was then 13s. a pound, and only a "pinch was allowed in the pot." The tea leaves, after they left the breakfast-room, supplied two further decoctions, one for the servants, and a second for the labourers, whose wives called at the back door for them. Brown sugar—real, good, sticky brown sugar—was what sweetened my tea upstairs, when I was allowed tea instead of milk. The vinegar was made at home, so was the ink, generally rather pale. The vinegar making seemed simple. Some beer with additions was put in jars and then set in the sun against the garden wall at the foot of old apricot trees, and in the course of time, by the help of a good hot sun, there came out vinegar. I thought this quite as marvellous as anything achieved by Pharaoh's magician.

Our letter-bag arrived at breakfast time, 8 o'clock. It was a light delivery, but a costly one. My letter from school cost 8d., the reply the same, which limited the correspondence between my mother and myself. Is the

penny post for family correspondence really less costly ? The bag always arrives now in the "family way," and stamps are bought by the pound's worth to refill it.

Then was the period for "Captain Swing's" exploits, of which the most conspicuous was the burnings of ricks—hay-ricks near home which burnt slowly but invincibly. The newspapers were full of riots : in Ireland of course plenty, but in England as well ; at Merthyr Tydvil and in the Forest of Dean, where fifty miles of fencing were pulled down, throwing open thousands of acres of plantations. Nottingham Castle was burnt, and Bristol was in flames. All this I learnt only from the newspapers, and it was mostly far away from home, but it gave rise to an uncomfortable feeling of danger and insecurity everywhere.

The Reform Bill was in every one's mouth—in my father's very much ; he wrote me many letters (I was only ten or eleven years old), full of anxiety and despondency, telling me that the fate of our country ("unhappy country," he called it) depended on the House of Lords, on concession or obstinacy on their part in the matter of "the Bill," "the whole Bill," and "nothing but the Bill." The Whigs, for a long time out of office and in the shade, but consistent and fighting resolutely as the exponents and upholders of well-understood first principles, at last broke through the Tory ranks and came into power. Henry Brougham became Lord Chancellor, and it was not long before he was by the side of his old friend my father, who, having long abandoned his practice at the Bar as leader of the Circuit, still retained some rooms in Bloomsbury. Thither he resorted periodically to obtain the earliest copies of *The Edinburgh Review* and the new Waverley Novel. It was here, as I was seated with him, absorbed in his book, only lifting his head occa-

sionally to desire me to snuff the candles, that we were both startled by a loud knock at the front door and by the servant entering in a flurried manner to say that there was a carriage outside with a very bold gentleman who desired to see my father and had sent up his card. "God bless me!" exclaimed my father, "show him up"; and in came the slim, towering figure of the new Lord Chancellor of England. There was a great shaking of hands with jokes which I did not understand, but which seemed to add to the high spirits of the friends, and brought forth bursts of laughter that almost alarmed me. These subsided in a minute or two into an equally remarkable state of seriousness, Brougham earnestly urging some proposal in which he constantly made use of the word "Commissioner," and which was as constantly followed by my father's firm utterance of "No! no!"; and then they parted. I believe Brougham had offered my father an appointment as a Commissioner of Bankruptcy, which he took to be *infra dig.* Brougham did not press the appointment, and his old friend was shortly raised to the bench of Judges.* Brougham introduced the one-horse carriage named after him. There was no coronet on its panels, only the letter B, and people said there was a Bee outside and a Wasp inside. I was taken up to these lodgings again very shortly on the occasion of the illuminations for the passing of the Reform Bill, and saw them all, even to those at the Mansion House, in a surging, roaring mob, under the protection of the coachman. Before we started the housemaid came up, much alarmed, to say that the people in the street intended to smash the

* Sir A. Pell retired from practice in 1825, and in 1831 was made one of the Judges of the Court of Review in Bankruptcy, a tribunal shortly afterwards abolished.

windows if we did not illuminate, whereupon she was sent off to procure some pounds of tallow mould candles, which I assisted to cut up into three-inch lengths and to stick on the sash bars of the front windows upstairs and downstairs. This appeased the mob and saved the glass.

In 1832 I left my home for Rugby, the public school in favour with the Liberals and Reformers, shortly to become so famous under Dr. Thomas Arnold. My father himself took me there outside a Manchester coach in the cold spring weather of April. He wore a recent invention by one Mackintosh, a waterproof cloak or cape. It smelt badly of dead poplar leaves, got stiff in frosty weather, and frightened the coach-horses as he mounted the coach side by the sharp, crackling sound it emitted. We arrived on a Saturday evening ; on the Sunday morning I had my first sight of Arnold in his study, whither my father took me. Though they had never met before, they seemed to me to be quite old friends, they had so much in common in politics and religion. My name was entered on the school list by Arnold, and so interested had he evidently been in his new acquaintance that my Christian name was omitted and nothing but my surname entered, with the name and title of my father and his residence in London. My father received the Holy Communion at the hands of Arnold in the school chapel, and left the next morning.

It was a curious, though remarkable, introduction for a small boy, for I had no preliminary examination to settle the form in which I should begin. I wandered, however, in the " Big School " into a group or class of the smallest boys I could see, and thus enrolled myself in the third form, about the lowest in the school. I sat myself down as far off as I could from the master, next to an

overgrown, heavy-looking boy who smelt of suet. Before long I found he was the son of a butcher in the town. My master, I found to my sorrow, was an adept with the cane ; he resorted to it—with little provocation or reason, as far as I could see—possibly with the object of warming himself, on cold mornings. Anyhow, it did not fail of having that effect on me. I afforded him constant opportunities for his daily exercise. The cane sometimes lapped round my open palm and broke off at the end, the fragment flying up to the ceiling. Mentally and physically I became callous, and I think I remained an inert sediment at the bottom of the class for over a year. Then Arnold took to examining the forms personally on a regular rota—an alarming day ; most alarming to myself when I heard him say to the master of the form, “ I observe this little boy [myself] to be always in the same place in the form. It will be well, I think, to remove him.” I fancied he meant from the school. But no, I was sent up from the bottom of the form, over the heads of my fellow-sufferers, to the lower fourth. How strange it seemed to be taught without the cane ! But lacking that stimulant, I made no advance, and being then a hardened little reprobate, my new master, on one eventful morning, addressed the form on the difficulty he was placed in by my intrusion among his docile and intelligent pupils, and wound up by saying that, disgraceful as it was, he felt the necessity of introducing a cane in order to “ get me on.” No cane had ever been wielded by him before, and he regretted exceedingly (so did I) having to introduce one into the lower fourth. I was then sent down the town to procure the instrument myself and for myself. On the very first application I burst out laughing. The master was

such a bungler. This cane, however, proved indirectly very efficacious. After receiving this absurd punishment at the master's desk, I had to return to my usual place at the bottom of the form, and was kicked on the ankles by at least twenty offended and scandalised companions during my passage. This was beyond endurance; there was nothing left for me to do, no escape, save by mounting to the head of the form by means of studious exertion, and passing out with the least possible delay to a higher form. I lost no time in doing this, cleared the lot above me by an intellectual bound that bewildered my master, delighted Arnold, and at the end of the half I was off upwards.

In a very short time I reached Bonamy Price's form—The Twenty; and then at last I knew what education meant, and really liked his training, but not always his punishments, which consisted in writing out for him such innumerable lines that no time was left for cricket or football, even when we scribbled with two, sometimes three pens in our fingers, risking detection of the repetition, but disguising the feat of penmanship by touching each line up with fancy initial and terminal words or letters. How well I remember one Christmas half! On the very last day, Livy was our author, Price suddenly woke up to the fact that we had already done with him the very book we were on. He gave an alarmed and angry start, and turning to Lushington, the head of the form, half screamed, "How's this? Tell me this moment, Lushington, we did this book last half, eh?" There was no denying it. "Write it out—write it out, all of you, before you go home!" We expected to go home, and by coach too, the next day but one. Oh! how I wrote (double pens too risky) all the next night and all

the next day, inked up to the elbows, and sleepy beyond description; but the task was achieved and we were liberated. In after-life my intimacy with Bonamy Price was renewed in my own house and in visits to him and his wife at Oxford, so I again sat at the feet of my Gamaliel, imbibing from him the truths of Political Economy. He enjoyed trying one's capacity for definitions. Often have I tested men who have made their mark in the financial world, among them a Director of the Bank of England, with one of his questions. This was, "What is a banker?" I never got the right answer. Price's answer, a neat and correct one, was, "He is a dealer in debts." *Id est*, he borrows and he lends, he is a debtor and a creditor, and thus he fills his coffers. I made no long stay in Price's form, but passed on to study the writings of St. John the Evangelist, under Dr. Lee, afterwards Head Master of King Edward's School, Birmingham. Thence I was moved up to the sixth, but never had the benefit of Arnold's personal instruction.

For three years I had, each winter season, severe attacks of inflammation of the lungs, recovery from which was a miracle. The treatment seemed cruel and hazardous—blisters between my shoulders and on the chest, with leeches filling up the intervals. The last attack promised to be fatal. It seemed to be beyond the skill of the school doctor. He relieved his anxiety and apprehension, however, at his bedside examination by jerking out, "It be damned!—it be damned!" and by sending up a fresh supply of the old-fashioned cylindrical phials of medicine with paper bands, parson-like, fluttering from their necks. The "sick-room" was comfortless, more so than the infirmary of a London workhouse. In it I first made acquaintance with the sight of death in

the person of a schoolfellow, a Welsh boy somewhat older than myself. He was, poor fellow ! dull, backward, and timid, and we had a belief that, little as we cared for him as a companion, he was less thought of and cared for in his native hills. Though it was evident for some days that he was dying, no one from home came near him. At length his father arrived, on the very day of his death, but it was then all over. I saw him come—can see him now : a short, sturdy man in blue coat with bright brass buttons. He and I went together as mourners to the funeral in a burial-ground or small cemetery in a field near the house. It must be all built round now.

I was quite the smallest boy in the school when I entered myself by walking into the third form—so small that no one bullied me, and I went by the endearing nickname (“black ” we called it) of the “little ’un.” I was so innocent that I actually offered my services as a fag at cricket to a delightful prepostor, one Hippisley, and being placed as “stop ” behind the wicket, imagined I was taking part in the game, though of course not permitted to bowl or handle a bat. As I was always retained by Hippisley, for whose prowess and muscles I had the highest admiration, I passed the first quarter, Easter to Midsummer, very cheerily. In the Master’s House, too, where I boarded, was a gigantic, broad-shouldered fellow, Curwen, of Windermere, who was leaving at the end of the term. He delighted in protecting me and carrying me about on the top of his head.

The end of my “first half ” at Rugby came unexpectedly. The dreadful cholera morbus had been slowly advancing from the north down the Midlands, and so it came about that, one sultry afternoon, as I was sweating bareheaded at Hippisley’s “pitch,” Dr. Lee marched

into the middle of the school close, and in his loudest voice cried out, "Boys, the cholera is at Bilton; you are to get home as quickly as you can." In five minutes the playground was a desert, and a rush made for the different houses. What chance had the "little 'un" of getting away the next morning with 300 competitors for places on the coaches running on the Holyhead road through Dunchurch? However, our travelling money was given to us over night, and I felt the necessity of losing no chance of making my way at dawn to Dunchurch. I was up betimes, packed my carpet bag, and contrived to force my small person into a brake which put me down at the door of the Green Man coaching inn, within sight of the Dun Cow posting house at Dunchurch. Coach after coach came up, but each successive one was boarded and loaded by my stronger fellows. I began to despair. I had contrived to lose or had been looted of most or all of my money except the coach fare, when, as I was standing alone in the dusty turnpike road, the Liverpool day mail dashed like a flashing dragon-fly out of the dark avenue of lovely Scotch firs on the Coventry road. An imperious blast on the horn brought out the change of shining horses from under the yard archway; four were out with panting flanks and four took their place by sleight-of-hand. "Here," said I in supplicating tones, "take me!" "Where to?" said a smart fellow in a scarlet coat with a cockade in his hat, the like of which I had never set eyes on before, and of whose duties and calling in this life I was profoundly ignorant. "London!—London!" I shouted. Before the words were well out of my mouth, the wheels were moving. I heard the order from the box "Let them go," and found myself, bag and all, jerked into a vacant place on the floor of

the front seat behind the driver. The guard, the good creature with the cockade, leant from the back, over the luggage, and made my bag safe under a strap that went over the roof. A sailor in a mate's coat and straw hat bid me hold on or I should go over the gunwale; and we tore along Telford's magnificent road as though there was a prairie fire behind us. One sharp twang behind from the horn of his Majesty's alert servant in scarlet cleared all moving obstacles from our way as if a Maxim had been fired down the road. Women rushed out and snapped up the children dotting the king's highway, slapped them and set them down again; disappointed turnpike men (for the mail paid no toll) shut their gates behind us with a scowl; and I felt that I was entering on real life at twelve years of age, but excessively hungry. I had eaten nothing since six in the morning, and it was now high noon. As we changed at Stony Stratford a girl brought out a small tray with two or three large wine-glasses on it and a small jug. She stood by the front wheel on my side of the mail; in a second the guard was there, and filling one glass with the strongest, brightest, and most comfortable ale I ever tasted, passed it up to me, saying, "There, my poppet, toss that off." The maid had given the coachman his modicum with a smile as he sat on the box during the change, and away we rattled. Dunstable, famous then for straw hats, bonnets, and roasted larks, furnished a change at the Sugar Loaf, St. Albans at the Pea Hen, Barnet at the Green Man, and with many a shrill twang, and jingling splinter-bars, we pulled up at the Angel at Islington. Being a cockney, I was aware of the New Road, so getting down, I called a hackney coach and directed the driver to take me to my father's house in Harley

Street. I was penniless and starving, having gone from morning to night sustained only by the glass of ale from the guard's private firkin at Stony Stratford. "What brings you here?" said my father. "The cholera," I answered. My father dropped the last Waverley novel, jumped up from his chair, upsetting a candlestick and scattering the powder out of his hair. "O my boy, you are not in pain, I hope?" "No," I said, "but very hungry and thirsty"; and then I told him the story, laying much stress on the generosity of the guard, for his ale had made a grateful impression on my mind. This was shared by my father, for he said, "What did you give the man?" "Nothing," I replied, "for my pocket was empty." "Do you think you would know him again if you saw him?" was the next question. "Certainly," I replied; "I don't think I can ever live to forget him." "Well, then," proceeded my father, thrusting his hand into his pocket and taking half a guinea from his purse, "do you go to-morrow to Islington and wait till you see him, and give him this with my best thanks for his kindness to you." However, I did not go the next day. I reasoned out that he would be away through Islington early on his down journey, and that the evening of the following day would be the time for renewing our acquaintance. So I walked along that dusty, dull boulevard, the New Road, and took up position on the kerb opposite the Angel, with my hand in my trousers pocket and the half-guinea inside my closed fist. We had come into London with a piebald leader on the off side in the traces, as serviceable a distinction for my purpose in the crowd of vehicles as the figure-head of a man-of-war in Portsmouth Harbour. Within half an hour I spied the piebald, was reassured by the

horn, and saw my friend drop to the ground from his little seat. "Here," said I, pushing forward, "my father sends you this with his thanks." I think he expected a shilling, for he opened his eyes very wide at the piece of gold, and exclaiming, "Your daddy's a cock," slipped off on his business without waiting a second.

I always travelled fast for my holidays in Devonshire—if not by day on the Telegraph, it was by night on the Quicksilver Mail, which ran to Devonport. The pace seemed to me faster by this mail than by the coach, but the night would give that impression, for the wayside objects seemed to fly past in the glare of the lamps. Of these the mail carried three in front, one of them on the splash-board. In dusty summer nights on Salisbury Plain the wayside and the road were all of one colour and one level; there were no hedges or trees to mark the track; it was only by the lights shining on the juniper bushes on the Plain that the route was safely kept. The eyesight of the horses was not to be trusted, for many of the best cattle were put in the mail on account of their breed, speed, and blindness. Once I found myself at night on the Great North Road on which an awkward bridge at Stamford had to be negotiated. I thought the driver seemed relieved when it was over, and he then remarked to me that it was not badly done, considering there was only *one* eye among them, and that was his own. Umbrellas on a coach top were abominations, as bad as ladies' headgear in the theatre stalls. The only safe refuge was the box seat, which at night was really comfortable. There was the driver's apron over one's legs, and, by taking up the cushion and placing it between one's left side and the box rail, it was possible to sleep

without fear of falling off. We were taught not to sit square, but turned a little towards the driver so as to leave his left arm quite free. This lesson was imparted to me on a cold night by a driver rubbing the knotted holly-crop of his whip under my frozen nose.

They were wonderful men, those drivers, those on the mails especially so, when it was warm enough and dry enough for them to exhibit their royal uniforms. Every moving thing on the highway had to clear out of the road. The guard's one short blast sent everyone right and left—the drovers rushed into the midst of their cattle to make a passage, the tremendous six-horse Pickford's wagons sheered on one side like apocalyptic monsters, the "po'-chaises" scurried deferentially to their proper side, and the turnpike gates flew open with a rattle. Then came the villages, with here and there a dim light in the sick-room upstairs, and the feeble light of the change-house, where with lanthorns and active strappers the four fresh horses stood awaiting us. The change appeared a piece of legerdemain; the drivers frequently did not leave the box. A little man—Davis, I think, by name—who drove on the Quicksilver over the Plain, would jump down, seize the reins, and then literally run up the side of the coach and perch himself like a squirrel on the box. He it was who taught me how a light-weight could relieve his arms of some of the severe drag of a pulling and racing hard-mouthed team. This was by crossing one of his legs over the reins when they were doing time on good ground. The Manchester coaches in winter had very bad work to do in parts of the Holyhead road when the long frosts and subsequent thaws broke up the way over the chalky Dunstable Hills. One Boyce then drove the Independent

Tally Ho ! On one occasion I was on the back seat of this coach with some luggage tied on the rail, the road was very rotten and full of holes, and, being behind time, Boyce drove so furiously over the downs that the seat broke off with the guard and myself on it, and I only just saved my neck by catching at the friendly hand of a passenger opposite. About my last interview with a mail driver was with Old Simpson, who drove, I think, the Lynn mail. I went down to the office in Cambridge at midnight, as I often did, to see the mail change, and give Simpson a cup of hot tea. The night was a terrible wintry one, and near Royston, in a stowstorm, the mail went over in a drift, and poor Simpson was smothered.

CHAPTER II

SCHOOL DAYS

My father made many inquiries of me about Rugby, especially as to how the Sunday was spent and what special teaching we got in the Bible. To this I would reply, adding the tale of my sad and stationary position in the third form (from which I did not ascend before his death), and describing the extraordinary diligence and activity of my master with the cane. My father listened attentively, often chiming in with "Ah! ah! yes!—just so!" and, to my astonishment, gave me to know how much tenderer my master of the nineteenth century was than his of the eighteenth, explaining to me that at Merchant Taylors in cases of punishment the master grasped the pupil's fingers in one hand, as you would a bunch of asparagus, and holding the points upwards, beat the ends and the nails down with the writing master's rule in the other. He told me also that he was made to eat all that was put on his plate by a dreadful female carver, who, when his powers failed him, exclaimed, "Master Pell, I observe you chaw hard, sir." To avoid the consequences of this deficient voracity, he explained how he and his friend Master Charles Matthews, whose acquaintance I had made on the stage, engaged the services of a drover's dog from Smithfield Market, and slipped the surplus of their plates under the table into his expectant jaws, wiping the grease off their fingers on his curly coat.

I saw more of the stage than most boys before I was thirteen years of age. Liston was my favourite and, I think, my father's too, but I went frequently also to the old Olympic Theatre in Wych Street. One fine morning during my holidays my father told me, after breakfast, that a very great actress would perform that evening for the first time at the Olympic. "Greater than Madame Vestris?" I asked. "Far greater," he said, "and much more particular, for she requires a special stage door for her own use." He added that I should come with him and see the arrangements in progress. So off we went, and on arriving at the side wall of the theatre, sure enough found workmen busy over an enormous opening they had made and were fitting up with folding doors. The posters announced the first appearance on the English stage this evening of Mademoiselle Djeck with Madame Vestris. We took our tickets, and I passed the rest of the day in a fever of excitement.

When evening came, we made our way to Wych Street early enough to secure good places. Oh! the delicious, refreshing smell of healthy sawdust and fragrant orange-peel, dramatic odours, pervading alike Macbeth's castle and heath, Juliet's balcony, Desdemona's couch, and the Fairies' haunt in "Midsummer Night's Dream"! How it stimulated expectations before the curtain went up and made the presence of favourite actors and enchanting actresses within, as Mr. Gladstone would say, a reasonable distance of time and space a certainty! The play for the evening was "The Prince of Siam." The scene, so the bills said, was laid in Crim Tartary: with my imperfect knowledge of geography, I thought it quite natural that this should be associated with Siam; when the curtain rose, I recognised in it a

pictorial acquaintance to which I had already been introduced at Astley's Theatre in the dramas of "Maz-eppa" and "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp." The dresses, too, of the warriors and Eastern potentates were old friends, likewise the armour, for the most part matchlocks and scimitars preposterously curved.

The first act disappointed me. The plot was unfolded by two loyal court officials, who explained that there was a rightful prince, young, gracious, bold, and beautiful, who, having fallen into the clutches of an usurper of evil disposition and appearance to match, was at that very time incarcerated in the upper storey of an impregnable round tower, that his retainers had been suborned or smothered, and that the prince, without bread, without water, and no ladders in the country, was wasting away in the stony, elevated solitude. But there was still one hope, not in the advance of an army, not in a fresh revolution, but in the promised advent of a princess powerful and resolute enough to rescue the sovereign unaided.

A whistle, and the scene changed, and before us was the solitary round stone tower with the mountains of Crim Tartary, a moon in the far distance, shining on one little window very high up in the tower. I understood at once that the prince was behind that window, and that even if he was unchained the jump would be fatal. The usurper seemed to have done the business effectually. No living creature was on the stage. The weird solitude, however, was made more weird by a stuffed wolf who crossed the stage without lifting his feet and made off in little jerks to his companions in the mountains. There was no beat of drum or shrill note of clarion; the silence was complete. At this moment I observed a boy at a short distance on my left holding up a tumbler, and a

woman with a basket of buns on her arm and a ginger-beer bottle in her hand on the point of setting the cork free to fill the tumbler. I felt that if that bottle went off with an effervescing explosion during this breathless hush and silence, the impending tragedy would pass at once into a farce. Luckily a spectator, sharing my feelings, snatched the tumbler from the boy and saved the play. At the same time, while my head was turned away, a clapping of hands and shouts brought it back towards the stage, and with the full and deafening accompaniment of the orchestra Mademoiselle Djeck made her *début* on the stage, absolutely shameless though without a rag of clothing on her person, while I, for my part, being inexperienced, was filled with amazement and some alarm. Not a soul seemed shocked ; on the contrary, the applause at this startling exhibition was redoubled, and the musical accompaniment swelled it in volume and discordance. Mademoiselle would have curtsied if she could, but there she failed, for she was an Elephant. The orchestra was silenced by command ; and the clamour of the audience subsided and passed away with a faint "Bravo !" now and again from the gallery. Mademoiselle approached the tower, and commenced an examination of its structure with her trunk, her curiosity being excited no doubt by apples behind the pasteboard masonry. Then a faint cry was heard, and a lovely face peeped from the window. It was very charming, and produced an immediate and most enthusiastic effect on the house in the vehement clapping of hands, in which I joined and sprained my thumb. A gentleman in a shabby black frock coat and white tie sitting next us was so much affected that he was obliged to leave the house rather abruptly, taking with him my

father's India silk pocket-handkerchief and tortoiseshell spectacles. Meanwhile the fascinating face had shrunk back out of sight in the cell, awaiting the encores which brought it once more in view. This was followed by a soliloquy ending with an appeal to Mademoiselle Djeck for help and liberty. The Djeck appeared to take in the situation, and at once did credit to her rehearsals. Approaching the tower, she reared her fore legs against its tottering counterfeit, and lifting her trunk on high she all but touched the sill of the dungeon's window. The house was hushed, while in response to soft, low music, not a face, but this time a leg appeared, the foot (in a white satin shoe), the ankle, the knee, and then some inches beyond. The house—pit, dress circle, boxes, lower and upper tiers, galleries—were all welded into one harmonious chorus of rapture to which it was impossible to add at the appearance of the fellow-leg joining in the attempt to escape. With a mighty effort Mademoiselle Djeck lifted her person, so that the pair of lovely arms which followed the legs could encircle her trunk, and the charming lawful prince, complete now in personal particulars, descended to the head, and then to the ears and back of Mademoiselle Djeck, and at last landed, erect and in tights, with a spring on the stage.

Thus it was I first beheld Madame Vestris, to renew my acquaintance with her in a few years in the quiet company of another gentleman in a black coat and white tie who did not steal pocket-handkerchiefs. The circumstances attending the escape of the Prince of Siam were so impressive, startling, and brilliant that I can remember nothing more of the play nor anything else, except my father's indignation when he discovered in the hackney coach that his handkerchief

and spectacles were gone. After this introduction, I made many visits to the Olympic, where the Olympic Revels and Olympic Devils were the stock pieces : Orpheus and Eurydice, Acis and Galatea, with Vestris in the infernal regions, and Braham singing " Oh ruddier than the cherry," and crushing Acis with a rock to the accompaniment of " Die, presumptuous Acis, die ! "

Then came the swift succession of summer halves and winter halves at Rugby. The summer half was a terribly long one, broken only by a few days' holiday at Easter, when the speeches took place and the boys of the midland counties went home. London was considered out of distance, but a schoolfellow in our house had relations at Dunchurch, so I got an outing there. A great steeple-chase came off at that place which was won by Captain Beecher on Vivian. I have good reason to remember it, for I had staked several weeks' pocket-money on the captain, encouraged thereto by a coloured plate I had seen of him winning easily in a St. Albans steeple-chase on a course remarkable for the persistent twisting of a brimful brook bordered by shockheaded willows in full foliage and its banks loaded with a perfect mob of spectators. He seemed to have the brook, the fields, the willows, all to himself, like an Alexander Selkirk, monarch of all he surveyed, all competitors being utterly distanced. So I backed him.

Another incident fixes this race in my memory. Near where I stood in the winning-field was a group of very talkative and disputatious gentlemen round a brisk young man in a smart frock coat on a wonderfully fine, impatient horse. He had nothing of the appearance of a jockey about him, but he seemed somewhat mobbed by the bystanders. All at once he cried

out in a clear, distinct, but not excited voice, "Well, then, I'll bet a hundred pounds I'll cover the ground fairly and be back in this field with the winning horse." Several said, "Done!" Beecher was then two or more fields ahead, but off the frock coat went like the wind, and I soon lost sight of it. Next, after an interval of silence and expectation, I heard cries of "Beecher wins!" to my inexpressible satisfaction; and sure enough, I saw the light jacket coming steadily towards the last fence at the bottom of the slope on which I stood, and then, not a hundred yards behind him, was the frock-coated audacity tearing up to him. Now, just this side of the strong stake and bound fence inside the winning-field, and in full sight of the crowd, was a "pit"—in other words, a pond for watering cattle. To this particular point the rider directed his horse, topped the hedge, and flounced into the water before Vivian had reached the winning-point. I never have seen such a splash, though it is possible a torpedo may send up such jets; but out of it all at a canter came up the Marquis of Waterford, apparently delighted at the finish. So I saw him for the first and, as far as I can call to mind, the last time in my life.

My schoolfellow Hughes has drawn so complete a picture of life at Rugby School that I have little or nothing to add to it. I was not at the School House, but, as I have said, where I boarded we lived hard, and were cruelly comfortless. At the latter weeks of the winter half I was generally laid up with acute and dangerous attacks of inflammation of the lungs, my kin being tainted with consumption. I think I owe my life to persistence in sleeping with my window open, though I was warned that it would kill me. After my last attack my mother was summoned to what was thought would be my deathbed

at Rugby. But I would not die, and I was taken by her to Sir Henry Halford for his advice. He had been in the old days a Rugby boy himself, and used to say how he had seen the body of Sir Theodosius Boughton exhumed in Rugby churchyard for an inquest on the suspicion that he had been poisoned. He described the sight and horribly offensive smell. Mr. Donovan, the prisoner, was hanged, after a trial wherein great stress was laid on his having been constantly occupied with an encyclopædia or pharmacopœia in the library at Lawford, in one volume of which a leaf was turned down at the word "Laurel-water." The mansion itself was gone when I was at school, but the sleepy Avon ran close to its site, and there was a tradition that on certain moonlight nights Sir Theodosius rose from below the surface in a carriage with a pair of black horses. I know the spot, and, as I dash by in the North-Western express, I invariably find my eyes straining themselves in that direction. Respirators had just come into fashion for weak lungs, and my mother asked Sir Henry whether I had better wear one. "No," he said; "if the boy's life is only to be saved by wearing such a thing, it is not worth saving at all." He prescribed no medicine (I had been drenched with it). I was to eat what I liked, drink tea made from hops, have some new milk the first thing in bed in the morning with a teaspoonful of old rum in it, and go to sleep again, port wine with my early dinner, and to hold a handkerchief to my mouth for a minute when I first went out of doors in winter. I had no further attack of congestion of the lungs for over sixty years.

The habits and practices of the school were extremely loose and irregular when I entered it. Smoking and

drinking were general. I remember a song (in which I joined) commencing with—

I'm a Rugby scholar and of a Rugby class,
And by the wrinkles on my face have tipped many a glass,

and so on to other enormities. Some big boy would take me over to the Cock on the road to Dunchurch, and there, having spent our money on some abominable punch, we proceeded to a coaching inn at Dunchurch to await the arrival of the Manchester coaches. We had not long to wait before one drew up to change, often with three, if not four, Quakers in drab coats and broad-brimmed hats on the seat behind the box. At these inoffensive merchants I was instructed to gibe, and to salute them with loud cries of "Ah, Cotton! Ah, Cotton!" They were as impassive and motionless as wax figures, which was very exasperating to a young gentleman whose father's income came from rents of land, who was a county magistrate, and so on. I could not understand it, nor why these white-coated, strong men did not cower under my sarcasms, or retort savagely. I had not then heard much of Free Trade. Peel was still a Protectionist, and bread at a shilling a loaf had not affected my internal economy or interfered with my appetite. It was not very long, however, before my eyes were opened. Years after this, when I came to know Mr. John Bright, I told him I should not wonder if he had not been one of the coach passengers I had insulted. "Ah!" he said, "very likely; but now the tables are turned, and I may say to you, 'Ah, land! Ah, land!'" This was in 1869.

But to return to Rugby. Some time, about 1833 or 1834, house libraries were formed in the different masters'

houses, and Boz was coming into repute. "Sketches by Boz" was added to our library. This and "Bell's Life in London" were great favourites with me. In a short time the fame of a story by Boz reached Rugby, and I heard people talking of "Pickwick," which was then coming out in monthly numbers. I remember the first time I set eyes on it was against a small pane of glass in a bookseller's window in the Strand. I took a good look at it. It had illustrations on the outside of a green paper cover. The price was, just then, beyond my means, and I saw no more than the outside of the cover. There was a boy, however, in "our house," son of one of the sitting magistrates in London, to whom his father, as good fortune would have it, sent the current numbers of "The Pickwick Papers" fresh from the press. This was treasure-trove in which we resolved that all should be partners. There was a two-horse coach, the Pig and Whistle, which plied between Rugby and Daventry, through Dunchurch, bringing on to their destination passengers for Rugby, who had come north by the four-horse coaches on the Holyhead Road, and it conveyed parcels as well. The day on which the new number of "Pickwick" would be on the road was ascertained, its arrival was watched, and on the precious print being handed to its owner, he was accompanied by an eager escort up the town and along the road to "our house," and so into the hall. There "Pickwick" was torn up into as many sheets as the number consisted of. The first page together with the illustration was handed, with just consideration, to its cockney owner. The other sheets were held in hand in strict custody. As soon as the first page had been read it was passed on to a

senior boy, who commenced his study of it, while the second page was passed to the original proprietor; and so in the course of twenty minutes quite a group of boys were all devouring "Pickwick" piecemeal, in deep silence, broken every now and then by bursts of laughter. I was small, and thus had my patience sorely tried in waiting my turn, which sometimes did not come till a night had passed away. At last, however, the precious sheet was dealt out to me, and it was thus I first read my "Pickwick." My attachment to Sam Weller was deep and enduring. It was derived a good deal from the critical observations I had myself had opportunities of making on the roads and in the inns I used on my journeys. Bits of Sam I had often come across: his hat, his gaiters, his inimitable striped sleeve waistcoat, his shiny hair and gay features, his impudence and his good temper, his wit and his proverbs; but it was left to Boz to arrange all these distinctive characteristics complete in one individual. It does not seem to me possible for the present generation fully to appreciate the amusing peculiarities of this specimen of a class as extinct as the dodo. Who in these days ever even sees a "boots" in the flesh? He never awaits you to be tipped, though a few years ago entries in hotel bills referred to his existence, where he accompanied the waiter and chambermaid among specific items of charge. Now he disappears entirely under the heading "attendance."

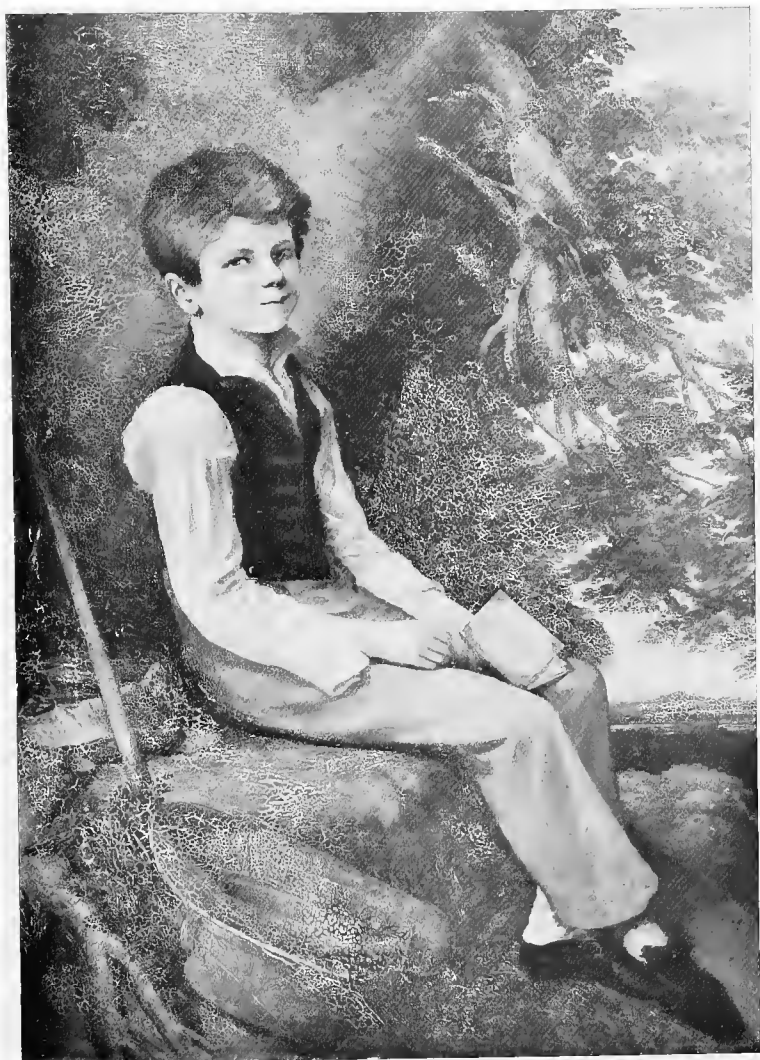
I well remember with what regret I finished the last lines of that immortal story, and the cruel disappointment it was to me to find only brief and unsatisfying mention of Sam in "Master Humphrey's Clock" and absolute silence about him in "The Old Curiosity Shop." He was absent, too, in the story of "Oliver Twist," which

I read at Rugby as it came out in *Bentley's Miscellany*, though there was some compensation to be found in Cruikshank's illustrations, and in the pomposity of Bumble and the local authorities, as well as in the alluring artifices of Charley Dawkins and the Artful Dodger. Rose Maylie I abominated, and I flew to Sophia Western, as drawn by Fielding, to clear the other maudlin nymph from my mind.

The sameness and tameness of the country about Rugby was as trying and distressing to me as it was to Dr. Arnold. The flora was a miserable one, though I must add I first met with the golden glories of the iris on the banks of the sluggish Avon, and there too I was delighted with my first sight of the flowering rush. The bathing was limited to certain spots: "Swifts," where the Swift joined the Avon and deepened its stream, for the sixth form; "Sleaths," a shallower water, for the lower school; while various "Holes" were prescribed for the different houses. "Anstey's Hole" was famous for its depth, the mud at the bottom, and the tradition of a suicide. We were quick to detect a dislike to bathing in any new boy, and revelled with delight over the capture of the miserable creature as he came out from "calling over." I call to mind a most exciting seizure of a Liverpool boy whose aversion to cold water was constitutional. He was of a palish green complexion much marked with small-pox, and stood on unusually long feet. Though he was surrounded and captured with no difficulty, he made a most resolute resistance to our proposal to take him "down town" and across the meadows to the fateful pool. The shop windows in Rugby were primitive and protected on the outside by shutters hung on hinges and opening back against the outer wall, where they were kept back by iron catches. Forcing himself and the

press-gang against these walls, he made desperate efforts to stop progress by clutching at the shutters as he was borne along. These, yielding to violence, came to, one after the other, with a slam and a flap against the windows, bringing the inhabitants in succession to their doors with exclamations of pity and indignant cries of “ Shame ! ” All this added zest to the enterprise and excited us to quicker and more remorseless action. The town was soon cleared, and the meadows and stiles hurried over till the stream was reached. At the sight of the clear water and the darting minnows a paralytic submission succeeded resistance, and clothes were stripped off with very little loss of buttons. A deaf ear was turned to a supplication to be allowed to go in by himself, in his trousers, from the shelving shore, and a positive refusal to take of his own free will a headlong plunge was the signal for compulsion. The frightened creature was seized by arms, legs, and neck, and with practised skill was thrown clear of the bank and bordering sedges. Limbs were extended into the gulf below, and, between the swing and the splash, he had one moment to utter, “ Lord, receive my soul ! ” What must have been the agony to cause such a cry ?

The school years seemed to wear away very slowly. The half-years at Rugby were long and tiresome, while the intense yearning for the holidays and home seemed never to abate. The early part of the summer half-year was the most trying. There were no football matches, and cricket did not fairly begin before Easter. It was a most monotonous and uneventful period. Saturdays, however, generally brought some excitement, for the London and Birmingham Railway was in course of construction, and a vast army of navvies was employed



From a picture by Smart.

ALBERT PELL AS A BOY

at Kilsby Tunnel, at the heavy earthworks required for the approaches to it, and at the station. These men, under very little discipline, were many of them great drinkers, consequently quarrelsome and pugnacious. To make good play with the fists led to renown, and the market-place at Rugby was the scene of many a tremendous engagement, where love of fame as much as fury excited the combatants. We looked for "the fights" to come off during our Saturday half-holidays, and Rugby market-place was conveniently at hand as well as within bounds. The ring was formed by a mixed circle of spectators and partisans. When stripped, the navvies seemed very fleshy, like brewers' cart-horses in comparison to the trained prize-fighters resembling racers in condition, whose battles in after-life I delighted to attend. Their blows fell with a thud, not a crack, but they fought fair. No hitting below the waistband, no kicking, no gouging. In a very short time disfiguring purple blotches appeared, and ultimately swellings around the eyes and cut lips and bleeding noses, unpleasant but fascinating to behold. Presently the sight became obscured. The half-blind man then hit wild, received a punch "in his wind" which doubled him up, and was carried off by his seconds, first to the parish pump, and then to restoratives at the public-house. I cannot remember that our enjoyment was ever disturbed by the school master or the constable. My feeling about the whole affair was that it was "nasty," and I felt that we boys carried out our differences in a neater and less offensive style, though the "punishment" was, I found to my cost, more severe.

One of the real good sort about the school as well as our great benefactor was Matthew Bloxham, the antiquary.

He seemed to live to do kind actions. Lawrence Sheriff's day was kept in the summer half as an anniversary of the founder of the school, and we had a whole holiday. "Old Mat," as we called him, delighted to take one or two carriages full of boys with post-horses (no "flies" in those days) to Warwick Castle, Guy's Cliff, and Kenilworth Castle, finishing up with a fine dinner and wine-glasses at Leamington. Then he was in his glory. We breakfasted at his brother Andrew's vicarage at Brownsover, and the mysteries of the tumulus and the Roman camp below were explained to us. He made a sonorous mouthful of the "Pretorian Gate," dwelling lovingly, *ore rotundo*, on the word "Pretorian," lingering and licking his lips, as it were, over the ample syllables. His brother Andrew put in a word, when he could, about some flower that was a bit less common than the very common and uninteresting flora round Rugby, which had no poetry in it. To be sure, there was lady's-smock, but no bachelor's-buttons, no snakeweed, no adder's-tongues or hart's-tongues, very little cuckoo-pint or lords-and-ladies, no mouse's-ear or devil's-bit or touch-me-not or heather or ling. After wandering in the lovely Hertfordshire woods, the change was one of the saddest on my return to school. However, whatever his brother might be, Matthew was happy on the Watling Street without flowers, and when he had got half a dozen of us boys to examine his old coins.

Years after leaving school, I renewed my acquaintance with him when sitting on a special jury in the Assize Court at Northampton, Maule presiding. The case was one of dispute as to encroachment on a public highway—to wit, the Watling Street. Why the Roman engineers and their road were introduced into the case I never

could divine, but so it was ; for the benefit of the legal profession, I assume. An antiquarian was thus indispensable, and the authority subpoenaed was my old friend. When he took his place in the witness-box he was tremulous with excitement and gratification. For once in his life he was to back his opinion on oath. He kissed the Testament with a smack and triumphantly offered himself up for examination. Soon, however, he somewhat irrelevantly stated that the Roman itineraries were by some held to indicate a sharp bend in the Watling Street, possibly at the very spot of the encroachment, that he himself inclined to this view ; but, he went on to say, an antiquarian more learned than himself held—— “ Stop ! ” thundered Maule. “ You need not tell the court what antiquaries more learned than yourself say on the subject. You are sufficiently learned for me, and a great deal too much so for the jury.” The collapse was painful, and as the court immediately adjourned for luncheon I got out of my pew and ran after my old friend to shake him by the hand and soothe his offended dignity. For this, on the return of the judge, I was desired to stand up and was reprovèd for extremely improper conduct. In excuse I protested I could not help it, for Mr. Matthew Bloxham had been the kindest friend to me as a small boy at Rugby, and I had not seen him since I left school. Maule, with a twinkle in his eye but with a stern voice, said, “ I am surprised, sir, that in your position you are so ignorant of your duty.”

Arnold introduced house libraries, Napier’s “ History of the Peninsula War,” Buckland’s Bridgewater Treatise, and the “ Essays of Elia,” and in the absence of Dickens I was content with these, more than content

with Buckland, for Rugby was on the blue lias, and I could verify the illustrations in his treatise by handling the actual skeletons and shells in the lias limepits at Newbold and the brickyards on the way to Dunchurch. The navvies called the Plagiostomes, oysters, and the Gryphæas, devil's toenails.

Before I had been six months at Rugby my father died. The tailor came and clothed me in black, in cloth that smelt disagreeably after a shower. Black as a mole, I was hurried up to London on a coach top, and there formed the principal character in the funeral obsequies. The black formalities—mutes on the doorstep, and the rest of it—entirely suppressed any natural emotions, and I gazed with curious but dry eyes on the performances of the undertaker and his assistants. The cavalcade was a long one—four black Hanoverians in the hearse, and several heavy black coaches and steeds to match behind it. At the right moment the undertaker-in-chief crowned me with a beaver stove-pipe hat draped with a yard of crape floating down my back, and pulling the hat off my forehead, I mounted several steps with assistance, and seated myself in the first coach. A military uncle immediately followed me, and the door was shut on us. Every one, I noticed, carried a white handkerchief, and occasionally applied it to their face. Neither my uncle nor I copied them. We went the whole length of London, one might say, from Paddington to Limehouse, along the New Road and City Road, through Whitechapel, at a foot's-pace; it seemed hours before I heard the loud tolling of a bell and the dismal procession came to a halt. What took place inside the church has entirely passed out of my mind, but not so the sight of the family vault under the church with

its tiers of coffins, white many of them, indicating that they contained the remains of those who had died under age—all of consumption. Here, in the East End of London, my father had been born, and here he mastered his spelling and pot-hooks in a free—that is, an endowed—school, where was inscribed over the entrance this splendid inscription: “Come in and learn your duty to God and Man.” Thence he proceeded to Merchant Taylors School, ending with a fellowship at St. John’s College, Oxford.

I was soon back again at Rugby, making my fifth journey along Telford’s splendid Holyhead Road, and tolerably well acquainted with the ways of coachmen, guards, porters, hostlers, postboys, and “pikemen” by daylight. I had yet to learn how to behave myself at night on His Majesty’s mail, and how to avoid some discomforts suffered by the inexperienced or the timid on these most royal vehicles. My experience came when I was thirteen years of age. My cousin had an invitation to the Musgraves at Eden Hall, and I was to go with him. It was in the summer holidays, and we left the Swan with Two Necks, Lad Lane, London, at night, outside the Liverpool Mail. All went well till we reached Fenny Stratford. There the box of a hind wheel got out of order, and we came to a stop at about half past one in the morning. The guard proceeded at once with post-horses and the mails. The passengers took to the kitchen in the inn, where I fell asleep with my face in the soot on the hob. At about seven o’clock, as there was no sign of repairs to the wheel, my cousin ordered a post-chaise, and we rattled away in fine style. There was nothing to obstruct the view between the front windows and the horses except a bar, to which the post-boy’s great-

coat was strapped. I had a delightful sight of that individual in a blue jacket, cords, boots, and a very furry white hat, bobbing up and down in the saddle, occasionally drawing his short knotted whip over the off horse's shoulders while he applied the spurs to the one he was riding. We lost no time changing chaise and horses at Dunchurch, Coventry, Lichfield, and elsewhere, till in the evening of the day after we had left London, while our chaise was being changed, I think at Congleton, I heard the blast of a horn and saw the Liverpool Mail rattling down the street. I shouted, yelled, and waved my little arms, and we were picked up and carried on to Liverpool.

I had subsisted for the most part of the journey on buttered toast and tea, when I could get it. No buttered toast, since railroads came in, has ever been made fit to eat. The art is gone. The secret, I believe, was a simple one. The dry toast was kept in readiness ; when wanted, it was dipped for two seconds in a saucer of boiling water and put at once on a hot plate. Then the butter, which was also in readiness, melted in a saucepan on the hob by the fire, was taken off by a waiter, who dabbed it on the toast abundantly with his shaving-brush and immediately covered it down with a bright tin dish-cover, and so served it to the hungry and cold "coach outsides." On the whole, however, we could not complain of what the innkeepers put before the coach passengers for breakfast and dinner. The bread was nutritious and infinitely better than the white, sapless, thin slices cut nowadays off some scientifically prepared loaf. In the thirties, one got a "hunch" off a huge, bulging loaf, with the mark on its base of the bricks on which it was baked, and with the healthy smell of the wood-

heated oven from which it had been drawn. The crust was neither tough nor rocky, but crisp and fragrant. The butter, before these days of technical instruction, separators, and margarine, was invariably good, so was the Cheshire cheese. Given these three comestibles, and a minute or two to get at them, with a pull at the tankard, one could get along very well for three stages or so. The twenty minutes for dinner came in due course. No small porkpies, no sardines, no cold boiled eggs, no wing or leg of a small fowl, on a counter obstructed with biscuit tins and bath buns ; but in the place of these disappointing "refreshments," a solid round of cold, perhaps hot, boiled beef, English bred and fed, and unconscious of chilled chambers or the decks of an Atlantic cattle-ship. If there was soup, it was of a quality that stuck to your ribs till you had crossed the coldest wold or the foggiest fen. Only think of doing Stainmore or Dartmoor or Salisbury Plain on Bovril or a concentrated lozenge in the first week of January, two hours before dawn ! With these excuses for food, life is nowadays sustained by the assistance of footwarmers, spirit-flasks, and fur coats. They would have been entirely insufficient and deadly, when we had nothing but a wisp of wheat straw between the soles of a damp shoe and the floor of the coach top, and nothing but West of England cloth to keep the wet out, no apron except on the box, and an arch-deacon's umbrella conducting a rivulet of rain between your coat collar and the nape of your neck. I can testify that the pittance of the modern refreshment dresser would not have met the necessities of coaching, and that with nothing better to fall back upon there must have been occasional loss of life.

I have said that, having seen with the utmost delight and admiration Madame Vestris on the Olympic stage, I renewed my acquaintance under different surroundings. Charles Matthews (*the* Charles Matthews), my father's schoolfellow, had for a close friend the genial bachelor rector of a college living not far from Rugby. When the great comedian paid the rectory a visit, he remembered his old Merchant Taylors' schoolfellow, and begged that I might be invited to spend a night in his company. So the chariot and pair of clerical cattle fetched me from school. How it rolled about on its C-springs over the bad roads of the thirties! How roomy it seemed, and how small I felt in it! I arrived in the gloom of a damp November evening, thin and coughing. Never can I forget the glow of comfort that followed the butler's throwing open the front door. After the cold commons of Rugby, the warmth, the bright wax candles, the lamps, the thick carpets and curtains, and the joyous sounds of revelry within, quickened my pulse, and revived life within me. I marched into the drawing-room, and there was seized on by Charles Matthews and introduced to the rector. There was only one other in the room, a lady. I was not introduced to her, and when I found, as I soon did, that I was in the presence of Madame Vestris, I was surprised beyond measure; she was so extremely unlike my stage favourite. I was quite sorry to have the earlier impressions dispelled, and I think something in my manner and countenance must have expressed disappointment. At dinner madame's dress took my fancy more than her features, and I am convinced I did not find favour in her eyes. Matthews, generally disinclined to be gay and humorous, I believe, with men, delighted to make boys happy, and he did his best with me, repeating

his old games, as he called them, with my father, who ought, he said, to have gone on the stage with him. How kind he was! what faces he made! and oh! how good with it all was the port wine! I helped to finish two bottles, possibly three. It did me an infinity of good. There was a great fire in my bedroom, and a famous meet of the Pytchley next morning in the village.

The years passed slowly away. The King died. We were to have a Queen. Born in 1819, the Princess Victoria succeeded to the throne in 1837, to be crowned on June 28 in the next year. I had a schoolfellow whose home was in the hollow of Piccadilly, opposite the Green Park, on the route her Majesty would take to Westminster Abbey—a small house with a balcony to the drawing-room floor. I had an invitation here to see the procession. The day was a very hot one, and I stood in the sun, with half a crown in my pocket, and, though hungry and thirsty, afraid to leave my post, an excellent one for seeing, till I fainted. I had, however, seen the dear Queen pass by. I can call nothing to mind of the procession, the soldiers, the bands, the exulting multitude—nothing whatever but the slight figure and the face, the composed face, rather pale, of the little body in the open carriage. How that carriage was drawn along, whether by elephants or horses, was immaterial to me; who was in the carriage, besides my Queen, is gone from my mind. The Duke of Wellington, the next person of consequence and fame in the realm, was there; he must have been close to me, so was a chimney-sweep. In the presence of the Queen they were to me equally insignificant. The dazzling presence of the Sovereignty of England effaced alike the conqueror and the chimney-sweep. Then I got quietly out of the house, found some

food in a back street, and went into the Green Park with sixpence in my pocket. The next day I was to find my way to Exeter. As hundreds of others did on that hot summer night, I lay down to sleep on the grass in the park. I think I saw fireworks in the air, and the opposite windows of Piccadilly bright with candles, some stuck on the sash-bars with stalactites of grease hanging from them. I was parched with thirst, and saw with satisfaction a drab of a woman with a shutter in front of her supported like a tray against her body by two straps over her shoulders. At each corner of this makeshift tray was an inch or two of lighted candle, and on it were some small, very dirty wine-glasses. In the midst of these a jug. The woman, bawling, "Water, water, sixpence a glass—who wants water?" came near where I lay. Getting on my legs and fumbling for my last sixpence, I said, "I do." She filled a glass. I tossed it off. It was gin, perhaps turpentine. The day began to dawn. The roar of the town died down. Piccadilly was empty, and so was my pocket.

Now, there was in those days a famous coach, the Exeter Telegraph, that did the journey of 171 miles in a day—that is to say, if I remember aright, leaving Hatchett's, Piccadilly, at half-past four in the morning, and arriving at the New London inn, Exeter, at ten at night. In my boyhood, having relations in Devonshire, I often had to pass part of my holidays there, and to secure a place for me on the Telegraph it would have to be booked a fortnight before. I never knew a seat vacant. It was a poor chance indeed, but I thought that it was just possible, that after all the racket, turmoil, and excitement of the Coronation day and night, some passenger might fail to turn up. The sparrows were chirping, the bright sun-

light shone through the leaves like a tonic, and I came out through an opening into Piccadilly at about 4 o'clock. The road was ablaze and already warm with the risen sun pouring its rays right down the centre of the Great Western Road. I had not gone far on my way towards Bond Street before I saw the white hat of the driver on the horizon. I ran forward, and was at the coach office just as the splinter bars rattled from the leader's halting. Full in front, full inside, but, in God's mercy, one vacancy behind! I was up in a second, followed by the guard with the way-bill from the office. In five minutes we had passed Hyde Park Corner. Oh, how happy and hungry I was! Brentford, Hounslow, were left behind, and no questions at present asked. At Bagshot, however, the guard, who had been looking over the way-bill, seemed at some loss, and as soon as the next change was over, asked me very civilly where I was going. "To Exeter," I replied. "Is your name Tompkins?" he said. "No, certainly not." "Then you ain't on the way-bill. Are you booked? There must be some mistake. I do not remember seeing you when we started." "No, certainly not," I admitted, "for I only got up into a spare place at Hatchett's." "But your luggage?" he said. "Oh! I must tell you I have no luggage, and no money." "The deuce you haven't! Do you expect the Telegraph can carry you for nothing?" "I don't," I said, "expect anything of the sort; but if you turn me off now, you will have carried me thus far for nothing. Now, I am all right if you will get me on to Exeter. You will find that Mr. Mann, of the New London Inn, knows me, and will pay all that is due. But if you don't find me some food on the way, I must drop off and beg. I have had nothing but a glass of gin or turpentine for

some hours. Bread and cheese and beer is all I ask for." "I'll chance it," he said, and he paid for my dinner as well. I think, however, he was more easy when the landlord at Exeter, coming to the coach side with a lamp, and turning the light on my face exclaimed, "Hullo! Master Pell, you here again? But what a state your face and clothes are in!" "Oh, yes," I said, "dreadful dusty; but come and get me to bed at once. I owe the guard a lot; please pay him my fare and give him half a sovereign as well. To-morrow I'll tell you all about the Queen going to be crowned, and I should like prawns and Devonshire cream for breakfast."

I spent some holidays with an uncle at Exmouth. He had been A.D.C. to General Fox in the great war, was an advanced Liberal, far ahead of my father, and regarded as a dangerous man. Some thought him mad, for he was convinced in 1830 that the Corn Laws must be repealed, and had a lease of a farm drawn up with a provision that, in this event, the rent was to be readjusted to follow the consequent fall in the value of wheat. He always maintained that Grouchy betrayed Napoleon at Waterloo, and that had he not done so, Wellington would have lost the day. He was up and out on the Beacon Hill ("Bacon," he pronounced it) every morning before breakfast, wet or dry; if the former, sheltered under a huge, green cotton umbrella. With his telescope under his arm he took up his position on the edge of the cliff or slope and examined the sands and low rocks just uncovered by the tide. Then, spying the cormorants, he would unbutton his coat, throw back the flaps, and in imitation of those rough birds, would catch as much of the gale or sun or fresh, wholesome sea air as came to him on his exposed chest, declaring

that the habits of the birds ensured health and hardiness, and should be copied by those who desired the same advantages. He had served in the disastrous Walcheren expedition, and denounced the conduct of that campaign in violent terms, holding up the Russians to ridicule and scorn. Their love of loot he thought disgraceful, and he never tired of relating how he had seen a Russian officer dismount to rifle the dead and wounded of their watches, purses, and ornaments, and how, stuffing the plunder into the top of his jack-boots, he was, on a renewed onslaught of the enemy, so weighted that he could not get into the saddle, and was captured and carried away prisoner. He had been, I think, A.D.C. to General Fox at Gibraltar, doing garrison duty there for a weary time. The monotony and exceeding dullness of the situation was trying to every one in the forts, till, as luck would have it, a discovery was made of casks of port wine buried in the sand on the neutral ground. Then all took to drinking to excess. No one was sober after mess, and the sure foundations of decay and disease were laid among his brother-officers, all of whom, he assured me, died within a few years. He owed his life to a splendid constitution and the regular practice, after leaving the table, of stripping to the skin and playing racquets till all the mischief in the liquor was sweated out of him.

I had no companions at Exmouth and no books I much cared for, though Godwin's "Caleb Williams" excited my imagination and set me wondering how such things could be. In after-life I read the book again, and I imagine it influenced my opinions. Afterwards I read with avidity the conflicting authorities on the then pressing question of Free Trade, and soon came to resent

legislative bars and barriers between the needful food and the hungry, and, though still a Tory, went off a sort of outcast from that party, a steadfast, unflinching Free Trader.

But to return to Rugby. On reaching the fifth form I had, owing to dangerous mischief in the lungs, to leave school, and for a year I was with a private tutor in the Midlands in the midst of the "stockingers," or framework knitters, a most miserable, under-sized, under-paid, under-fed class, subject to the cruellest forms of "truck." They were, however, stirring, and considered dangerous; the Chartists, too, were just coming into notice. In some of the rough and poor Leicestershire villages outlying on the Forest, the sight of a stranger in decent broadcloth brought out a miserable, buzzing swarm of stockingers from their frames behind their long, cottage windows, to curse and vituperate while they pursued the retreating "aristocrat" with sticks, stones, and mud beyond the confines of the hive. I more than once had to run for it. In this and other ways I did not fail to become aware of their distress, poverty, and helplessness. The expressions applied to them portrayed their case. They were described as "Shapes" (*i.e.* light tail corn), "Breeches and bones," and so on.

Amendment, however, was on its way. The Liverpool & Manchester Railroad had been open some few years. The London & Birmingham was in course of construction; and these were levelling influences. The great posting-houses with their ranges of stables were closing. Post-boys, post-horses, and post-chaises were not to be obtained; the travelling carriage, compact, distinguished, and clever, disappeared from Long Acre; there was nothing left for the fastidious in the shires

but to resort to the democratic trains or to remain at home. The resistance to railways had been very pronounced and sustained in Northamptonshire. One considerable proprietor announced in the midst of cheers at a public meeting that the first train that came through his property should pass over his head. An irreverent shoemaker in the crowd shouted, "You'd be none the worse for it." The county town rose in the plenitude of its municipal and coaching power, and succeeded in compelling Stephenson to keep five miles away, and to face all the difficulties, dangers, and horrible cost of cutting a road through quicksands and through the lias and Kilsby tunnel. A severe punishment, however, was to follow in the shape of the wretched passengers' accommodation afforded by the boarded shanty and dreary platform on the bleak, exposed bank at Blisworth station. For years the "opposition" did penance there at the hands of the London & North-Western Railway directors, while waiting there to be "picked up" by the stopping trains for the metropolis or for the Black Country. The narrow waiting-rooms were crowded with unsorted company. Local cattle-droving was then frequently undertaken on the roads by women, generally of singularly unprepossessing appearance, with weather-beaten features and unrefined language. They seemed more indifferent to the weather than the men, though ill-equipped for storms and rain. I remember one poor, audacious, damp creature, her print dress and woollen shawl as wet as a mop, finding her way through the first-class passengers to the blazing fire in their special room. As the steam rose from her clothes, a well-known supercilious member of the Pytchley Hunt, going to the door, summoned the station-master

to ask if he considered "that lady to be a first-class passenger." If he did, so be it; but if he did not, he asked the favour of her being removed. The poor woman retired civilly enough, begging pardon for intruding.

The droving to London was conducted in a different way. At ninety miles from Smithfield the salesman's drover rode of a Sunday afternoon into the great grazing-pastures to pick out the fat beasts already marked for his drove. When he had made up his drove in the locality, he started leisurely down the lanes to the turnpike road and so along it, staying night after night at accustomed houses to rest and fodder his beasts. Finally, they reached the old pandemoniums of Smithfield Market in the city of London, where, after being sold by salesmen, they were killed at the different slaughter-houses belonging to the butchers for whom they were bought. The cattle were of all qualities, from the best to the very worst. London was then, as now, the first market in the world for the disposal of the best and the worst articles, for there the full value of either description could be made. To understand the scenes in Smithfield, Dicky Doyle's illustrations of "Mr. Pepys, his Diary" should be consulted. As an occasional visitor myself at the market, I find very little, if any, exaggeration in this delightful sketch. The Martyrs' Memorial now stands in testimony of human faith and endurance under torture, anticipating on the same spot the patience and suffering of thousands of God's creatures, the victims of brutal cruelty and indifference to animal suffering.

CHAPTER III

CAMBRIDGE

As I was now eighteen years old and had been entered on the books of Trinity College, I had to pass a ridiculous examination by a fellow of the college. He was the rector of a parish in the Midlands, a charming companion full of anecdote, having been employed by the Government on the Continent in the secret service in years gone by. Quite recently he had undertaken some duties of the same nature during the Bristol riots, when that town was under the protection of the military. Watching from a window the cavalry patrolling the street, he observed that every time they came round, a rioter ran out of a narrow court and unhorsed a dragoon with a well-directed brickbat. This was repeated or attempted several times, when the officer in command placed a fine swordsman in the rear, who, at the next attempt, dashing up, took the man's head off and sent it rolling in the gutter.*

Not very long after this I had my own experience of great riots. This was in Birmingham. I made a short stay in the town and saw the Bull-ring burnt. I fancy the Corn Laws and the People's Charter were at the root of the disturbance. The Tory party was the unpopular one with the mob. On one side

* This story is vouched for by a friend whose father had often heard it from the accomplished swordsman who was the chief actor in it, and who, when pot-valorous, always described the unfortunate man's head as rolling down the gutter making faces at him.

of the Bull-ring were the house and premises of a tea-dealer of that party. The open space or square was full of a seething, angry mass of people, when the young men, partners in the business, with an air of bravado came out of a first-floor window on to a balcony, smoking cigars. Leaning over the balustrade, one of them threw the burning stump he was smoking among the people. There was a cry, "They have given us fire; we will give it them back." A rush was made, the premises were raided, and in a few minutes they were in flames. This was followed without loss of time by setting fire to several other houses in the Bull-ring, the property of unpopular owners. As at Bristol, so at Birmingham—the military were called out. Young Westley Richards, of the great gun-making firm at Birmingham, was my friend. He was asked what protection was required for their works, and his reply was, "None." Though his politics were not those of the "low party," he told me he thought he could make arrangements which would afford sufficient protection. He took me to see them. He had taken a hint from Fieschi in his attempt to assassinate Louis Philippe, adopting his method, but with better success. The entrance to the Westley Richards works was up a narrow passage, at the end of which was a sash window on the first floor. The sashes had been removed, and in their place a frame inserted in which were ranged, tier upon tier like the comb in a beehive, innumerable gun-barrels nicely pointing down the passage. A placard invited the townsfolk to take a peep at this battery. The sight was enough, and the works were never molested. I slept during the riots in a public-house or small inn at Edgbaston, near the works of a very unpopular floor-

cloth manufacturer. I think his name was Harris. He also declined the offer of military protection, assuring the authorities and the mob that he was quite equal to meeting any destructive attempts of the latter. In the process of his manufacture much scalding water was required. He attached flexible nozzles to the boilers, kept his fires well up, and was unmolested.

On looking back, how disturbed those times appear, compared with the present! The introduction to, and forerunner of, Reform was violence and outrage. Rebecca and her crew were destroying toll-gates in Wales. Captain Swing and his gang were burning hayricks round London, and I went out on evenings to a low hill in the fens to see the corn-stacks here and there lighted up, while with a wind the flames rushing along the high stubble, as on the prairie, unchecked by any hedges, broke in flares against other stacks in the open to their utter destruction. These fires generally took place on Saturday nights after bad markets. At an agricultural dinner at Royston, where old Lord Hardwicke (Governor Eyre's defender, and Lord Lieutenant of the county) presided, rick-burning was much discussed, and Lord Hardwicke, a grand, hearty, outspoken old Tory, in responding to the toast of his health, informed the assembled farmers how concerned he was at this fearful destruction of property, and how it puzzled him to think who the incendiaries could be. Speaking very deliberately, "Some," he said, "suggested the labourers; but I hardly think they are the offenders. I see no reason for that suggestion, and as I am quite sure the landlords are not, I wonder who in the world they can be." Some signs of nervousness among the guests were caused by this very pointed conjecture, and subsequent speakers, who no doubt

had had this topic festering in the brains as a subject for orations, avoided any allusion to it.

During my boyhood I saw a good deal of the Fen Country, as my father had property there, which passed to my mother on his death in 1832. I used to accompany them, as a child, in the annual visit which they paid to it. We drove all the way from near London, staying for a day or two with an aunt near Bedford, and always visiting the old abbey church at St. Albans, where the first bait was made. The old, weird pile of buildings made a lasting impression on me ; I regarded the interior as mysterious and monkish. It was the first historical building with which I became acquainted, and when the guide lighted a candle and took us down steps to the vault in which lay the bones of Humphrey, the good Duke of Gloucester, I was overcome with reverence and awe, much increased by his throwing with a mirror a strong light on the ashlar work at the head of the coffin, where a rude sketch of our Saviour on the Cross was cut. I could, as I have already said, on fine days just make out the long line of the roof of the abbey from a field twelve miles away on my father's place, and I was never tired of searching for it. Mounted in the branches of an old oak, I pictured in my mind the duke's vault that it covered. On the road we baited, too, at Dunstable. The Sugar Loaf, I think, was the inn where we always came away with a tin of cooked Dunstable larks. I was glad we did not pass the night there, for I had been told that if you did, and looked under the bed, you would probably find a corpse in a coffin completing the first stage out of London on its road to the family vault down in the country, while the undertaker's men were carousing in the kitchen

and the black long-tailed stallions munching oats in the stable.

Passing through Godmanchester and St. Ives, and so to Earith, if the season was wet, the Fen Country at once became much in evidence. At this place the River Ouse is diverted from its eastward course to join the Cam by simple but important engineering works—two great artificial channels which carry its waters in a direct line towards the Wash: one, the Old Bedford River, nearly on the level of the fen; the other, a much more important work, the New Bedford River, elevated in an artificial aqueduct on a bank above the land. Between the two rivers or parallel cuts lay the wide expanse of the Washes, relieving the New Bedford River of excessive floods, which are discharged through sluices at Earith on to the Washes. The tide came up the new river at Earith. The high road had to cross the Washes, and when the floods were out, ferry boats offered their services, and the ford was indicated by high posts on either side marked with the depth in feet of water. On reaching the bridge over the New River, the boats were abandoned and succeeded by a very bad road, bordered by deep dykes, disfigured with shock-headed willows. There were no hedges, no trees, no grass fields—all was black loose soil under the plough. The dress, the manners, the talk of the people were all new to me. Some had nets, some guns (“hand”-guns, they called them, to distinguish them from the long duck-guns, special duck artillery fired from the stem of the duck-boats). Here and there we would meet a man with his leaping-pole, shod at the bottom with a flat foot. Tucking his gun under one arm, with the other, taking a short run, he sent the end of the

pole into the midst of the dyke, and, clinging to it, was carried over in an amazing leap. Some were in such boots as I had never seen but in picture-books—long leather ones rolled down over the leg to the knee for dry land, and pulled up to the hips in the water. These men carried wooden scoops and “fly-tools” for their business in the dykes. Their complexions were dark, but they were well made, with neat feet and hands.

After driving some six or seven miles through this strange country without a house, we came to some low hills up which the road went in an improved condition, passing through inhabited villages, in one of which we made our journey’s end. This was the highland, a beautiful, fertile soil, easily worked and most fruitful; but, excepting just round the villages, where there were some old enclosures, all the land was open and unenclosed, though not, as in the south of England, with commons. We paid our visits to my father’s principal tenant at the fine old Beristead House, and a court leet or court baron would then be held there by my father, who was lord of the manor, for the admission of copyhold tenants, the receipt of fines, and the adjustment of disputes about encroachment on the “ways” on which the commons’ cattle grazed. Breaches of the customs of the manor were also brought under notice and stopped, and the appointment made of a very important officer of the manor, the “Pinder.” His services were constantly required, and he was for ever bringing up cunning donkeys, wandering cows, and loose colts to the fine brick enclosure, the manor pound, close to the walls and part of the curtilage of the Beristead. There they remained under lock and key till replevied on payment of the proper fee. I was fond of

climbing up the red-brick walls and getting on the bold picturesque coping to look down at the captives. The Pinder was not a young man, and pigs at "shacking"-time were occasionally his masters. They were very uneasy and restless when in durance, whereas the donkeys stood stock still in the sun, almost asleep, with the lower lip dropping as if they were well accustomed to their quarters and were certain of release, and the cows chewed the cud placidly till kicked by a cart colt. Then a general rumpus ensued in which the pigs took a leading part, getting entangled in the legs of the rest of the community, and finally drawing up in battle array in a corner with their snouts "at the rest" outwards.

If the pound was interesting to a boy, the village cage was more so, though in less frequent use; when it was called into requisition all the circumstances attending it were more impressive and serious. It was a square, brick building, small, and arched over with brick at the top. The door was narrow but stout, adorned with auctioneers' and other posters. The soil it stood on was sandy. The key was in the keeping of the parish constable. Human nature adapts itself to its surroundings and is not slow to avail itself of advantageous opportunities. In an open field parish with much commonable land at hand, where very varied rights of ownership and occupancy prevailed, a parishioner inclined to live on his wits without any settled employment or inclination for hard work was likely to become a "village pest." Such was the case in our fen parish. "The pest" was born and reared in the village, where he grew up to man's estate and independence. Some said he was an idiot, some that he was insane, some that he was devilish cunning. He was short in stature and

square, inexpressibly dirty in face and fingers. His hair was like tangled tow, and he was deeply pitted with the small-pox, the dirt lodging in the pock-marks being an additional disfigurement. His eyes were in a perpetual twinkle, except when they blazed with rage. His hands reminded one of the claws of a badger, and he used them as such. He was his own tailor, but his skill was confined to very primitive art, as his dress consisted of two garments only, a bifurcated skirt or kilt, being a reduction of a corn-sack *ad absurdum*, and a jerkin made out of a calf skin united to the skirt at the waist by some butchers' skewers. He was a free drinker, and when not bawling on "the street" was in all probability engaged on some iniquity in the open field. When such was the case and he was discovered, the injured parishioners would hunt him back to the village and call out the constable. The usual preliminaries before Justices of the Peace were omitted, a sufficient crowd collected, and the delinquent was apprehended, not without much resistance and clamour. He was then forced into the cage and locked in. A few children loitered about the door, indicating that the cage had a tenant. It was in this peaceful rest after turmoil that I once had to pass the cage, and noticing the children's excitement, asked them what was going on. They exclaimed, "He's been a-thumping the door and a-swearing, and says he's not a-going to be kept in any longer, and now you can hear him 'scratting' like a rabbit." The children ran home in fear to their cottages, the news was spread, and a small circle of mothers and old folk soon collected to witness the escape. I stayed for one, among them. In the course of half an hour something like a rat appeared from under the foundations, and it

was plain that the tunnel had been made. Two hands, or rather claws, were soon above ground, tearing away the earth for the head to follow. Loud cheers of encouragement heralded this exhibition; the soil began to heave, and out came the shoulders, divested of the calf-skin jerkin. There was a little hitch at the hips and some struggling, during which the timid returned to their cottage doors and the stoutest boy tore off for the constable. That representative of law and order had, however, gone off to milk his cow on the distant "way," and the village was at the mercy of 'the pest,' who would soon be parading it in his bifurcated sack and threatening vengeance if some one did not bring him his jerkin. I believe the poor fellow ended his days after all in a madhouse.

At the time I was admitted at Trinity College, Cambridge, Wordsworth was master, and I entered on Peacock's "side," the undergraduates being marshalled in their regiments on "sides," under three chiefs of the college. There were no rooms vacant for me in the college, so I lodged out for the first four or five terms. It was soon clear to me that I might be as idle and unstudious as I chose, and I availed myself of my freedom. There were few of my old Rugby companions at Trinity, and, as it was the Michaelmas term, there was no cricket to reunite those of us who belonged to other colleges. New associations and new acquaintances had to be formed. It was the time for practice on the river, and a sort of recruiting was going on among freshmen. Weighing only about ten stones, upright and active, I was speedily approached by George Denman and enlisted in a Trinity boat of which he was either stroke or coach. I was placed in the bow, and as I seemed likely to be serviceable,

I was put into training. Now, the food put before the pensioners in Trinity for dinner and the way in which it was served were abominable. It was inferior in quality and spoilt in cooking. We had three-pronged steel forks to eat with ; before using them we passed the prongs through the table-cloth, and at once three black spots indicated the wounds on the cloth. For any soup we had to "size," or pay extra, the same for pudding. The inelegant bedmakers who waited at table generally announced the "sizings" to be "Julia" soup and custard pudding. The beer was "swipe." For all these blessings we had to stand up at the recital of a Latin grace from the high table. There sat the dons, noblemen, and fellow commoners, enjoying the comestibles of civilisation and of the upper orders. I broke away in a very short time from this fraud and appeased my hunger at an eating-house out of observation of the training spies. They reported, however, on my insubordination and on my inveterate habit of eating pastry, and this caused my removal from the boat, and so I was left to my own resources in the matter of exercise.

Football was then unknown at Cambridge. Rugby was famous for the game, and when I left, it was considered that the school field had lost a rather distinguished player. I loved the rough game as much as, or more than, cricket, and missed its excitement and conflict sadly. It seemed there were other outcasts like myself, some too heavy to hunt or row, some too poor, some who, not having been at public schools, were fretting life away in "constitutionals." An inspiration reached me that there was here an opportunity for getting up football. It was said that such a proposal could not be entertained among men ; boys might hack each other's shins and cling like

leopards to the necks of their opponents without offence, but not so University men. I had to go, therefore, into the highway and lanes, and there I could only find twelve willing to make the venture. Among them was a host in himself, Barstow, afterwards a sitting magistrate in London. He must have weighed about twice what I did, but he undertook to be the captain of one side of six, and I of the other of seven, and soon we had our first "puntabout" on Parker's Piece, and in a month we had our goals up, with a Bohemian in charge of them and our coats, when we played. Then we began, objects of wonder and at first of contempt. In time curiosity, with the renown of Barstow's deportment, style of play, and language, attracted quite a little circle of onlookers. We played the Rugby game, of course, which I had some difficulty in teaching Barstow, and still more in keeping him to the rules of it when he was master of them. He was full of vigour and wit, sometimes rather broad, but we established football at Cambridge.

In the year I took my degree the usual rivalry between Trinity and St. John's for the Senior Wrangler's place was as keen as ever. Our man was Cayley.* I forget the name of the Johnian. While the examination was going on in the Senate House a small crowd was frequently in attendance outside by the door, discussing the merits of the examined and waiting to get the latest intelligence of their work. I, among them, went for this purpose, and on a Johnian in our group saying, "I wonder how

* Cayley was Senior Wrangler, and from 1863-1895 Sadlerian Professor of Mathematics. Barstow achieved the distinction of the "wooden spoon" in the same year. The story goes that he was asked in the examination paper to "graduate the steelyard"; to which he replied, "Mr. Barstow cannot graduate the steelyard, but hopes that the examiners will graduate Mr. Barstow."

our man is getting on," Barstow in a loud, contemptuous voice said he did not know, nor did he care, but he could tell him that "Cayley had finished his papers a quarter of an hour ago, and was now licking his lips for more."

The second year of football brought a large accession to our numbers, and it was clear that it would become a University game. Rugby sent a fair quota, but our best Rugby men were in the University boat in training for the great race. Cross, brother to Lord Cross, was one, Prickett another, and, I think, Gough another. George Denman (afterwards Mr. Justice Denman), however, Senior Classic and head of the "poll," played with us. When some twenty-eight years had passed over our heads, I found myself in the House of Commons (just elected), wondering much at my unlooked-for elevation, where everything was so strange and still so impressive. I was seated below, but next to the gangway, and was examining the front bench opposite, on which were Gladstone, Foster, Lowe, and Ayrton, much as I would a cage of foreign animals at Wombwell's Menagerie, when, in the midst of this abstraction, a tall, manly figure stepped across the floor of the House, made one step up, and sitting down on the gangway by my side, extended an open hand across my knees. As I made no sign, the Hon. Member in a deep tone said, "I don't think you remember me." I regretted that I did not, and explained that I might be confused by the number of new faces around me. He said, pulling up his trousers on one leg, "Well, I have good cause to remember you," and, pointing to a scar on his shin, "I am George Denman, and you did this for me on Parker's Piece at football." It was a great pleasure to meet with him again, though, as before, engaged on opposite sides. Our last meeting

was at one of the delightful gatherings of old graduates of Trinity in the hall of the college. At the banquet we sat next each other, grey-headed, but as lively and unconventional as when we were undergraduates, devoid, thank God! of pomposity, for no football player could be pompous, and we drank the loving cup together and crossed arms and hands over "Auld lang syne," then with a walk in the fellows' garden we parted, never to meet again.

As my parentage entitled me to take an honorary degree, my residence at the University was only for a little over two years. They were two very happy but very idle years, and it was not until the last terms that I made many acquaintances, being contented with the society and confidence of a few friends. I had my own horse, though I did not hunt, but was fond of attending some of the races at Newmarket, specially matches. The course and the company and one or two of the trainers whom I knew had great attractions for me, and the rapid ride back in time to be marked in hall was exciting.

Cottenham Common was then undrained, and therefore sometimes quite under water in winter, affording splendid skating. Of this I, with my friends, took every advantage, driving or riding to Denny Abbey on the Ely Road, where floods nearly touched the old Roman highway, and skating away at once on to the world of ice. On one occasion, getting under the lee of a large haystack, the ice gave way and let me in. In summer this fen or common was covered with the finest milch cows, and produced a cheese similar to but richer than Stilton, and in autumn a speciality, "single Cottenham," with the flavour and consistency of Camembert.

Prize-fighting was then at its zenith, and had great

attractions for me. To the Castle in Holborn, Tom Spring's tavern, I often paid a visit. He was a quiet, well-spoken, civil man, his house was well conducted, and no rows or sprees were allowed. Many, if not most, of the famous fights in my time came off at Six Mile Bottom or elsewhere near Newmarket. My closest friend had a brother in the Guards; their drag came down from London to the great events, and, picking us two young fellows up, took us on to the ground where the ring was pitched. It was thus I saw the matches come off between Johnny Broome and Bungaree, Ben Caunt and Bendigo, but sometimes I rode to the scene of action. On one occasion, I forget which, there was delay in one of the men appearing, and we were apprehensive of some magisterial action having been taken. At last, however, a racehorse van with four horses and postilions galloped up with Lord Queensberry and the pugilist inside. In a minute or two the antagonists were stripped and inside the ropes, with their seconds at the corners. The fight was a fair and manly one, nothing whatever disgusting about it (as with the navvies at Rugby). Before long "the sponge was thrown up," and so were the pigeons with the intelligence under their wings. The day was a very bright and a very hot one, and I watched the splendid birds mount up and up and circle round and round, before they chose their course. Next to me on horseback was a well-made, tall man in black frock coat and white tie, evidently a parson. When I took my gaze off the birds I noticed he seemed to be still watching them, gazing, with a pale, upturned face, the sun shining full on it, and quite motionless. All at once, with no warning, no struggle, no cry, he fell out of his saddle like a bale

of black baize on the hard heath, dead before he reached the ground. This was the last prize-fight I attended, and in the course of a few years they were degraded by "fouls and squares," and very properly entirely suppressed. We have got the revolver and arsenic in their places, to say nothing of garrotting and Hooliganism.

There was one, and I think only one, incident in my college days sufficiently exciting and of such public interest as to be entitled to record. No contemporaries can I find now who can call it to mind. I have good reason not to forget it, for I hazarded my neck within measurable distance of the gallows. It came about in this way. Anderson, a fugitive slave from the United States, had made good his escape to England; by universal consent and tradition he so acquired freedom, and his owner became deprived of any title to his person. He had ceased to be a chattel the moment he stepped on our free soil. There were, however, in this case, some extraordinary and unheard-of legal complications, under which a claim for his surrender was advanced, and with such force and pretence of reason and argument that the case was relegated to one of our courts for decision. Matters, therefore, stood in this way: a trial was to take place, and the result might be that Anderson, who was now a free man in England, would have to be landed on the other side of the Atlantic a slave. This seemed a transformation inconceivably cruel and monstrous, and one that at all hazards should be prevented. While I was in a fury over the matter, one of my Trinity friends, with some foreign blood too in his veins, and of an excitable nature, came to me denouncing the law, and declaring that Anderson's return to the United States by any order of our Courts

must be prevented. He had, it seemed, talked the matter over with one or two others, but wanted to enlist about twenty desperadoes in his enterprise, which was this : first to put down five pounds each ; then if the decision of the courts, from which we anticipated no appeal, was adverse and Anderson must be given up, we were at once to take steps for his rescue. This was to be effected or attempted on his transfer to the vessel conveying him back to America and slavery, either from the boat between the shore and the ship, or, if the prisoner got on board, from the ship itself. We felt quite certain of general sympathy, that public feeling would go with us, and we in no way dreaded the result of a criminal prosecution. As good fortune, however, would have it, the courts decided that Anderson was free, and that there was no legal obligation for his surrender.

The life was a very joyous one at Cambridge, but I rather avoided some of the accustomed habits of the place, specially "wines"—that is, a conviviality after dinner in hall, in friends' rooms (dessert with port and sherry, followed by coffee and anchovy toast). There was much singing and giving of toasts and "sentiments," but unless Charles Kingsley was among us, I thought it dull. He used to take his departure suddenly and early, and then one would see him out of Magdalene windows sculling with bare arms and with all his might down the river. He was at Magdalene College ; but as the pensioners there had the liberty of asking a friend to dine in hall with them, and I had several friends there, we used occasionally to meet. I do not think any of us quite understood him. He had ways of his own, we thought, extravagant and visionary.

In the year that I entered Trinity one of the proctors

(Smith of Caius) rendered himself very unpopular from his diligence and severity. He was feared and disliked. He was attended in his patrols by a wonderfully active little "bulldog," nimble and long-winded as a hare. He chased a little friend of mine twice or three times round Rose Crescent, Market Place, and Trinity Street, when, on the very point of making his capture, he slipped and broke his leg, poor fellow! His master had become so very unpopular and disagreeable that it was decided he must be punished by a dip in the river. Mr. Smith, however, was on his guard, and frustrated the attempt by retreating to his college stronghold, the outer gate of which was promptly closed by the porter. The Trinity men by this time had got together in the street, and using a builder's plank as a battering-ram, smashed the door, only to find a strong chain stretched across the doorway inside, under which the assaulters would have to stoop in entering. As on the threshold we saw a Caius man with poker uplifted on guard, we all hesitated. Meanwhile the Trinity dons had been sent for—Peacock, Sedgwick, and Whewell. On their coming up, a townsman ventured the attempt of thrusting Whewell aside, whereupon that wondrous example of stature and wisdom took the rapscallion by the coat-collar into an angle of the church opposite and pummelled him unmercifully—a warning to us undergraduates that we had better take ourselves off, which we did. Mr. Smith had so impressed me by the exercise of his University authority, that long afterwards, on meeting him unexpectedly in Regent Street in the evening, I bolted for a moment down a convenient passage, and could not divest myself of a feeling of caution in returning to the street.

Billiards were prohibited in the town, and the proctors constantly made raids on the rooms. The best tables were kept by one Martin, in Bridge Street, and were consequently much frequented by undergraduates and raided by proctors. Martin had been a scene painter, and made use of his art and skill in deceptively decorating the walls of his rooms : a fireplace here, a house door there, a window looking on a lake there, a bower, a pulpit, a grave, a throne. Some were painted on canvas over the entrance to a passage, some on a loose flap covering a staircase. On the alarm being given, we jumped at the canvas or dived down under the flap, and left no trace of our presence. It was legal, however, to play billiards at Chesterton, and in the pleasant rooms of the Roebuck inn there, with the river at the bottom of the garden and the common beyond, I was instructed in the game. Before I took my degree, however, the University granted licences for tables in the town.

The years then seemed to linger in their happiness and want of care. The summers seemed always sunny and hot, the winters bright and frosty. Flowers and spring came together as the poets sing of them. As, at dawn on the outside of the mail, we drew nigh to Cambridge, the nightingales made the Trumpington copses and roadside groves ring with their notes ; nor were they to be silenced by the guard's horn or the lively rattle of the leaders' splinter-bars. No nightingales are now to be heard by the freshman or graduate in the Great Eastern Railway coaches. About the time I took my degree this astonishing line made its first essays, under the title of the Eastern Counties Railway. It became distinguished for its unpunctuality and shortcomings. My first journey on it was from its terminus

at Broxbourne to London. I reached Broxbourne by coach, expecting a speedy finish to the journey. We had not, however, gone more than a few miles on the line before we slowed down, then stood still. After waiting some time, I got out of the carriage, to find the engine a hundred yards ahead, detached and unable to raise steam enough to move along alone. Then the men in charge of it descended, and pulling up the wooden fencing, tried that for fuel ; but finding the palings of no service, and the sun being well up and the day mild, they sat with their legs over the rear of the tender, their faces towards the unfortunate passengers, and proceeded quietly to make a meal. I quite forget what happened next, but I have some idea that I walked on to London. An ode to Patience composed some years afterwards encouraged that virtue by instances of its ultimate reward, and among the consolations for waiting, the last line ran, " Even Eastern Counties trains, they come in *at last*."

Accidents were frequent as well as delays on this remarkable line, and its engines at one time bore on a plate the ominous name of Slaughter as their constructor. They were good enough to look at, but bad ones to go. It was alleged of them that they had the habit of " jumping"—" bucking " without invariably coming down again in due position on the rails. When the enterprise was extended as far as Norwich, there was a grand celebration of the achievement, with a banquet at which the bishop of the diocese, Stanley, attended. I heard that the Duke of Cambridge, sitting next him, inquired of him the number of his children. The Bishop, mistaking children for clergy, replied, " About 300." " God bless me ! " his Royal Highness exclaimed, " worse than Solomon, my lord !—worse than Solomon ! " The

contractors for the making of the railway were Messrs. Peto & Bett. Now, Mr. Peto was a Dissenter and his partner a sound Churchman. The Bishop, the father of Dean Stanley and an ardent whig, either in proposing or replying to a toast, inspired by liberal emotions, referred to the good conduct of the navvies, and connected it in some way with the nonconformity of their employer. After the cheering which followed on this episcopal commendation had died down, Mr. Bett, apologising for the interruption, asked leave to remind the Bishop and the company that he, Peto's partner and equally the employer of the men, happened to be a member of the Church of England. This modest observation only elicited a sort of murmuring purr.

Many notables tried their hands as chairmen of the Great Eastern Company, among others Lord Salisbury, and George Hudson, the Railway King, but with no avail. Great hopes were entertained by the shareholders that Hudson would bring them round. He was a strong Protectionist, and I was taken to a dinner at King's Lynn to hear addresses from the leaders of that party. The whole of the little picturesque town was crowded, and the excitement was intense. Lord Granby, afterwards Duke of Rutland, was, I believe, in the chair; right and left of him were Lord George Bentinck, Disraeli, Hudson, and, I rather think, Lord Berners and Sir Edward Dering. This was my first sight of Disraeli, whom I afterwards came to know so well, when he had abandoned Protection for tormenting Gladstone. He was then M.P. for Shrewsbury. I thought his get-up very "fly be sky." * He told a story of his

* Fly-by-sky, or as above, according to the English Dialect Dictionary, is "a giddy, thoughtless, flighty person," etc.

walking during election time in a Shropshire lane and being startled by a hideous face thrust through the stumps of the hedge bottom, the very personification of Free Trade. "Hullo!" he shouted, "where are you going?" to which, with hideous grin, the face replied, "Bock agin." So, he went on to state, was Free Trade. Lord George Bentinck, who, upon Sir R. Peel's change of front, had become the accepted and vigorous leader of the party, made a very impressive speech. Then came Hudson. Oh! how unlike Bentinck in form, language, and manner, but extraordinarily energetic and very voluble! As he proceeded seriatim with his assertions, he enforced them by repeatedly digging his thumbs down on the table and shouting, "Them's the pints" (points). As he did this Lord Granby slapped his great broad back by way of applause and encouragement, and Lord George Bentinck looked as if he should like to put money on him. But it was all of no avail; Free Trade appealed to the bellies of a hungry and ill-fed populace. The loaf was 11*d.*, green tea 13*s.* a pound, sugar 6*d.* to 1*s.* a pound. There was a duty, a heavy one, on light (windows), on walls (bricks), on wood, on wool, on locomotion (posting), on wheat-meal (grain)—in fact, on all the necessities of life indispensable to civilised existence. The nation was thus left to rely on home produce, the very growth of which was checked by a duty on drain-tiles, afterwards removed on condition that the clumsy article was plainly branded "Drain." The Irish famine of 1847 rent the veil of Protection in twain, and the ports of Great Britain, with the duties removed, were soon replete with the produce of the world.

Something else, also unexpected and novel, came over the seas just at this time to mend the fortunes of land-

owners and tenants, and to revive their drooping spirits. It smelt strongly and had the disadvantage of a foreign name, Guano ("gohanna,"—the field-folk called it, with a sneer and an oath). It soon, however, rhymed with "hosanna" in the village concerts, outlived ridicule, and made the earth bring forth by handfuls. It was, too, to become the handmaid to agricultural chemistry. The jeers about manuring a field out of your waistcoat pocket and harvesting it in your jacket pocket ceased. Parson Huxtable appeared on the scene, who vowed he could by the aid of science grow a prize turnip on a deal board. The stinging sulphuric acid tickled Hodge's nostrils and burnt his gaiters as he dissolved ("absolved," he called it) bones for the manure drill. When bones came too dear, the phosphatic nodules of extinct fishes, dug up first in Cambridgeshire, filled the gap. Superphosphate of lime, like guano, increased the arable produce, and the scientific genius and studies of John Bennet Lawes, with his colleague Henry Gilbert, made Rothamsted the great instructional institution for all the farming world. I was much captivated by these new and interesting discoveries and developments in agriculture, and, having just enough capital left me by an uncle, I was spared the necessity of adopting a profession. In this way I missed the benefits of a regular course of training, and became a wanderer for awhile.

With a fishing-rod and some flies and a knapsack on my back I took the Great Western train (the "Exeter Telegraph" was gone) for the West of England. The Whiteball Tunnel beyond Taunton was not open, and passengers were taken over the hill in coaches. More than once a rather short, smart, well-made guard with a fresh, almost baby face let me out of the

carriage. It is strange that the features of this one servant of the company should have been fixed in my memory. The man was quiet and undemonstrative ; but beneath those fair features was lurking the will and wickedness of Manning, one of the cruellest murderers that ever came (with his wife) to the gibbet. She made black satin unwearable by being hanged in that fabric. At Tiverton Junction I left the railway and took to my legs, which carried me through rain and sunshine right away to the Land's End. My first stop was Tiverton. The Headmaster of Blundell's School was a friend, and he gave me an introduction to tenants holding school farms on Dartmoor. Round Tiverton I knew the country well. A cousin owned a beautiful little estate, the whole of the parish a few miles off, with a real Devonshire village. The two lines of thatched cottages right and left, facing each other, had a strip of brilliant green common in front of their gardens, parted down the middle by a gravelly channel or way that was at once the parish road and a trout stream. On the green were the children, the geese, and the ducks ; against a cottage garden gate a pony with two huge panniers piled up with firewood ; by the trout stream a gipsy tin-ware cart, the owner shouting and carrying the glittering pots and kettles over his arm from house to house. My cousin had disfigured the place by building a modern brick-and-slate farmhouse with a bay window. All the rest was cobble and thatch, charming to view. Oh the pity of it, to think what the Welsh slate and cast-iron spouting has done to deform English homes, large and small alike !

I started away early on May 19, 1844, down the high road by Bickleigh, and reaching Exeter at a quarter

to ten, got my breakfast at the New London Inn. I then went to the Cathedral service, and on again at one o'clock over Haldon Hill, with its magnificent prospect east and west, to Chudleigh by Haytor, and reached the Golden Lion, Ashburton, at half-past seven. I fared exceedingly well, as I caught some trout in the brooks, and had them cooked at a farmhouse. The dairy was flagged with irregular slab stones, over which a clear stream rippled away, cooling and cleaning. The farmer's wife, with naked feet, was getting the milk ready for scalding. This she did by putting the earthen pans containing it among the hot wood ashes and embers on the kitchen hearth. Soon the heat took effect, and the surface of rich milk was covered with a wrinkled yellow coat of thick cream, flavoured to perfection with a suspicion of wood smoke. This with some home-made bread and the broiled trout made a good meal. I slept at a farmhouse belonging to Blundell's School, without a tree near it, and with waste all round ; a small garden protected by a rough granite wall grew a few cabbage plants. Some melancholy hens paraded in front, which filled me with astonishment and wonder on finding they were web-footed. It turned out, however, that they had leather patches sewn on to their toes to prevent them scratching up the garden mould—a clever expedient I never came across again.

At last I got to the extremity of my wanderings, and stood on a very wild day at the farthest point I could clamber to of Land's End, where I stopped like a watch run down, unable to go farther. After a while, when it began to get dusk, I wound myself up again and trudged back to Penzance. Here I found a little passage-boat advertised to sail for the Scilly Islands the next morning.

I went aboard, and in a few hours reached St. Mary Town ; but as I had plenty of town behind me in England, I decided to avoid the repetition, and hearing that Sampson Island was inhabited, hired a boat and made for it. I found my Robinson Crusoe there in the shape of a small farmer in a low granite-built house, with a granite wall of the same height round it enclosing a small garden, the soil of which seemed also to be composed of granite powdered. I do not remember that there was another habitation on Sampson, but I found my Crusoe at home, talked farming and flowers with him, and proposed being his guest, if his commissariat could meet this additional call on it. He took me in, and explained the industries of the islands, agriculture and trading. As early as might be, potatoes were planted, helped on with the guano. As soon as the young crop was raised, it was shipped to Liverpool and marketed there at a high price. The ship then took on board a Lancashire cargo, and was despatched to the Mediterranean, where it was disposed of, and the vessel, freighted at once with Italian produce—oil, dried fruits, and comestibles—returned to an English port. Having discharged her Mediterranean cargo, she made her way promptly to the islands again, and loaded with the second crop of potatoes to be disposed of on the mainland. Thus, having completed four voyages, she was laid up for the winter, to renew her busy tramp the next year.

My stay on Sampson Island was brought to an unexpected and disagreeable close before the week was out. My host came into my bedroom early to say I must leave. “ Oh, dear ! ” I said, “ why ? Is my bed wanted ? ” “ Not at all ; but you must go, and to-day too, I am sorry to say.” “ I’ll pay in advance,

if that suits you better." "It would not help a bit," he said; "you really must go, and leave the islands as well." "That is going too far," I remonstrated. "Of course, you are master of this house, but not of all the islands." "Just so," he said, "but Mr. Augustus Smith is, and his orders are for you to go." The position and the whims of Mr. Augustus Smith were then explained. He was the lease-holder under the Duchy of Cornwall or the Crown of all the islands, and was in fact a Marquis of Carabas as pictured in "Puss in Boots." So I made my host easy by acquiescing; and putting on my knapsack, paid the very moderate reckoning, and made off.

CHAPTER IV

FARMING IN MIDDLESEX

It had been proposed that I should read for the Bar, and arrangements had been made for studying with a special pleader. Rooms had been taken for me in Great Russell Street, and a day fixed for my occupation of them. When, however, I went up to London, I was met by the landlord, who informed me that I must return, as he had taken in another tenant. I do not suppose I was very keen in the matter, and, as already said, I was independent of a profession. I liked the country far better than the town, and the open air suited my constitution better than the confinement, shade, and smoke of the street. So I took a farm in the Harrow Vale, twelve miles from London. The staple production of the district was hay for the London market, but there were about twelve acres of impervious clay under the plough, producing a modest yield of the finest wheat in the kingdom for flour. The sort was "Chidham White," in demand for biscuit making. A few acres of beans were also grown, the rest of the one arable field was in dead fallow. The ploughing was done by a wooden plough with wooden breast drawn by three horses at length. The seed was sown broadcast. Threshing was done by the flail. The dressing of the grain was much as it had been in Saxon times. The grain, when threshed, was made up in a

head on the barn floor. A sloping screen, or riddle, was placed alongside of it, which had a hopper at the top, into which the grain was shovelled in small quantities at a time ; as it ran down the screen, the small seeds were taken out and got rid of. I have omitted, however, to say that previously to this the grain had had the chaff blown away from it by falling in front of a draught of wind raised by four sacks nailed on four bars or arms fixed in a spindle or roller with a crank and handle at one end and revolving by hand action on a rough frame. When the chaff and the small seeds had thus been removed, the next operation was to "throw" the wheat. The wheat was put in a heap at the rear of the threshing-floor, and the thresher with a wide wooden barn-shovel threw it forward, with a careful turn of the wrist, in the air to the far end of the floor towards the open barn doors. The result of this treatment was that the heaviest and finest grain went the farthest distance, and the lighter and inferior grain, the tail, dropped at a shorter distance. With a light home-made birch broom the labourer separated the two qualities, collecting them from time to time into two heaps. Still, in both the heaps there remained "whiteheads"—that is, grain in which the chaff adhered to the wheat—and these had to be removed. This was done by "fanning." The thresher was provided with a large open tray of fine close basket-work, in shape something like a scallop-shell with a handle at each wing or side ; putting some grain in this, and resting the upturned edge or side of the fan against his body for a fulcrum, he kept tossing its contents up, dropping its opposite side or edge a little at the same time. By this action or trick he jerked the "whiteheads" to the far edge of the fan, over which

he pushed them with the palm of his hand. It only remained now to measure up and put the grain into four-bushel sacks. The whole operation was a tedious and expensive one. I think the threshing alone cost five shillings a quarter of eight bushels, and probably the dressing-up eighteen-pence more. The machinery or implements employed might have been bought for forty or fifty shillings. The thresher made his own flail. In the absence of watches, time was kept and marked in a primitive way. A crack in the barn doors, when these were set back, admitted a beam of sunlight on the jamb; across this, notches were cut with a knife at different distances. When the full ray reached one mark, it was luncheon time; another illumination on a lower mark indicated dinner time. These marks are still to be seen on old barns in Berkshire.

The hay was made in a more careful and studied fashion than nowadays. No machines rattled in the meadows, nor was mechanical assistance called in at the building of the rick. At first not even a hand-drag was in use. I remember the introduction of wooden ones, out of Buckinghamshire. They were considered wasteful, for the wide and long teeth allowed the finer blades of grass to slip through and be lost. Early, very early, in the morning, while the dew wetted the grass, the strong, enduring mower entered the field. He took a sup of ale from his wooden bottle, and then charmed the still, misty air with the music of the whetstone on his scythe. The patient team rested meanwhile, and gathered flesh and strength undisturbed against the day of the hay cart. No such rest now; out of the monotonous cutter they are yoked into the horse-rake, out of the horse-rake into the cart shafts. Then, with

their throats moistened and their scythes whetted, the leading men of the gang swept down with a swish the first swarths. The next followed, and so on in diagonal procession, two, three, four, in their white shirts, sleeves turned up, and straps buckled round their middles to hold their fustian breeches in position. Their ample calves swelled the home-made stockings, and the whole was supported in patriarchal, hobnail, laced boots. This powerful and somewhat solemn procession, with legs apart, was carried irresistibly forward till the edge was taken off the blade and a halt was called for whetting. Then up went the glittering blades in the air, a lock of grass was picked from the ground to wipe them; back into the loins went the hand to withdraw the whetstone from the leather sheath. Then again the music of the scythe at the far end of the field announced the sad fall of buttercups, ox-eyed daisies, lady's-smocks, and meadow-grasses. Meanwhile, the sun rolled up on the horizon or over the wood, higher and higher, and the dazzling light and summer heat cleared away the moist dew. The "cut" became dry and harsh, the whetstones and the bottles came in more frequent request, and anxious glances were directed towards the gate or stile in the hedge. At last, but still due to time, the wife or the child appeared with basket and breakfast or "nunch," and all adjourned to the shade of the hedgerow. Very few words were spoken, but the clasp-knives came out of the pockets and were soon at work on cold bacon, bread, and onions. That over, the empty basket went back to the cottages, the short pipe and tobacco closed the meal. Then an hour's more work, and then before noon, during the hottest hours of the day, sleep and snores for two if not three hours,

and then work, hard work again, well into the shades of evening.

Before this, however, and while the mowers sleep, a troop of noisy, chattering haymakers with straw bonnets and aprons arrived in the field, and the making of the hay commenced with a thorough and complete breaking-up of the swarths. Each woman had her own rake and fork, heavier than those in use now (for the light steel American implements had not yet appeared, and, after all, the hand-rake was the tool that best served the purpose of making good hay). Hacking up with the hand-rake got the broken grass into windrows, between which the bared ground took the sun and dried up. Then two windrows or three were drawn by the rake into one, the "double windrow." These were pulled over once before putting into small grass cocks. Thus the hay kept its green colour. Exposure to the sun bleached it. The small cocks in time were put into larger ones, skilfully topped up and trimmed to resist a shower. Last of all, these were opened out into the "cart rows," the mowers were called off, the carts and boy drivers came on the scene, and the heavy work of pitching and loading began. A detachment of chattering and joking women with hand-rakes cleared up the ground in the rear of the carts, gathering literally every blade. So it went on while fine days favoured the work—mowing in the early morning, carrying when the sun was well up, with unceasing, uncomplaining toil till the dew began to rise. The remuneration for overtime and work was beer "totted out" whenever it was demanded. It was a poor exchange for hours taken from needful household duties, rest, and sleep.

There was no hay in the world to equal the Middle-

sex hay for the London market; no scent in the world to surpass that of the inside of one of its trusses. How the sleek, tabby stable-cat appreciated it as he curled himself up in it, and absorbed its fragrance in his bright, well-cleaned coat! How charming to lift him warm from the truss, and listen to him purring, while the horse, looking round, joined in a subdued whinny—"Grace before meals." As soon as the fields were cleared, they were top-dressed with well-rotted manure, and shut up for the St. Swithin rains to force the eddish, or aftermath, in prospect of the great fair at Barnet in the first week of September. This attracted thousands of Welsh and Scotch cattle, to say nothing of ponies and screwed horses, and wild Welsh sheep as well. Here I made my first acquaintance with the fraternity of dealers, beginning by buying of Welshmen small cows which were fatted off in the eddishes. Their sheep I left alone, knowing the impossibility of getting a score or so to the farm without losses; and as the dealers brought their flocks of ewes on at once to the farmstead, I bought on the spot. But oh, the job of keeping them when paid for! They were branded at once; but none the less one year the whole of my little flock disappeared, to be recovered many miles off at Reading. No fences kept them; those they could not jump they crept through, and I have known them caught by their heads in rabbit-snares. At last, when a Midland consort, a stay-at-home gentleman, was put among them, they quieted down for the winter. Let the weather become ever so severe or the snow ever so smothering, they had no idea of eating hay, even if put in their way. They much preferred brambles, and scratched like reindeer through the snow to get at the

scanty grass. With the spring came the lambs, sold off at excellent prices as soon as fit ; and then a few weeks later the dams, stripped of so much of their fleeces as they had not left on the hedges, were disposed of for mutton.

CHAPTER V

FARMING IN THE FENS

I JOINED the Royal Agricultural Society of England, as a life-member, in 1843, but I had been present at its second General Show, held at Cambridge on Parker's Piece in 1840, a very modest affair, remarkable, however, for the excellence of Southdown sheep exhibited by Mr. Jonas Webb, of Babraham. He, as well as his landlord Mr. Adeane, had been a close friend of my father, and after his death, when my mother had a farm in hand, he made her annually, as a present, the loan of one of his sheep to run with the ewes. I had not long left college when my mother, at my instigation, sold Pinner Hill, and went to reside at Wilburton, our Cambridge-shire property, some description of which I have already given. The lapse of years had brought but little change. The fen, with its "grounds," "dykes," and "droves," was just the same. The steam-engines and scoop-wheels secured it from flood, unless the river banks were burst or "blown"—that is, undermined by vertical pressure of a very high flood and deep water. Then hundreds of acres became again "bright" with a sheet of water, and there was a deluge. The "highlands" were still all open, unenclosed fields. There was hardly any "waste," but "common rights" and "sheep-walks" existed in every parish. There was, too, much copyhold land, and the tithe was high; rectories therefore were valuable; benefices of one thousand, two thousand,

four thousand a year existed in the neighbourhood. Fifteen or sixteen miles off was one of eight thousand a year. The see of Ely, as held by Bishop Sparke, was correspondingly wealthy, and the "pickings" attached to it, in the way of patronage and ecclesiastical offices, superb. The incumbent, here and there, found the climate uncongenial or bad for his wife. It was not very difficult to become a licensed absentee. When, however, Dr. Allen became Bishop, a stop was put to all this. The asthmatical, the rheumatic, the agueish, who pressed their infirmities on the notice of that excellent prelate, were all met with the firm but gentle declaration, "Reside or resign." Remonstrance and medical certificates availed nothing, and the gentleman "in black with a white tie" had to continue his spiritual teaching on the spot. I admit that, unless his heart and soul were enlisted in performing the duties of his calling, it was a sorry existence.

The parish open field has now almost entirely disappeared, through the passing of private enclosure acts or the operation of the General Enclosure Act of 1845. Having myself owned land, much of which was in the open fields, and having also been the lord of a "strict" manor, I can but laugh, and at the same time lament, over the ridiculous nonsense disseminated on this subject by the democratic orator and politician, and by the so-called liberal author. To begin with "the lord." I did not find that I had rights of common on the surface of the waste or on the ways or common land of the commoners more than an utter stranger. The right to graze the ways with cows was confined to a limited number of persons, the commoners. Horses, goats, geese, sheep, were not commonable animals. The sheep were in three

limited flocks, the first belonging to the manor, the second to the rectory, while the third was an independent one, the rights of which could be bought and sold. These three rights of grazing were called sheep-walks. The sheep in each had its shepherd, who stalked ahead of his flock, the dog bringing up the rear and every now and again rushing in, police fashion, at any ewe that ventured to snatch a bite from the corn that grew on the ends of the "lands," which, unprotected, bordered the green "ways" between the cropping. The commoners' cows, about twenty-two in number, were "fitted," or tethered, with rope and shackle out of reach of the corn. After harvest on a given day the commoners' cattle and pigs roved all over the stubbles to pick up the "shack." They also stocked an inter-parochial waste or common at all seasons of the year, and it was the commoners, not the lord of the manor, who resented and resisted the intrusion of the "public" claiming or attempting to turn stock on this land. Sometimes the trespass was summarily stopped by ham-stringing the unprivileged animals. The vulgar idea of the general public having rights of any kind on the waste or commonable land was never for a moment admitted. When the enclosures took place in those days, the "public" got nothing, nor were any interests considered except those of the landowners and commoners. The labourers, *quâ* labourers, got nothing in the case of the early enclosures, but in the later ones Professor Fawcett and others secured the insertion in the Acts of Parliament of clauses setting out, on the waste, allotment grounds for their use and enjoyment, at fixed rents.

Some coveys of quails were hatched out in the summer, and the golden plover was not then a stranger. Mention

is made in Shakespeare's plays of the quail-pipe, which has greatly puzzled his commentators, as it did me, till one day, when gossiping with some old people, I saw hanging on the wall of their little room a belt with buckle and three appendages dangling from it like the teats of a cow. I was told these were pipes used for taking quails. They were leather pipes with a mouth-piece like that of a whistle at one end, the other being closed. Upon forcing the air out with a squeeze of the hand, a whistle came like that of the quail. The note of one pipe was loud, the next not so loud, the third quite faint. The "quailer," concealing himself in high corn, used the first pipe as a challenge. This would excite a defiant answer from any quail within hearing, and brought it running towards the challenge. The quailer then used his second pipe, leading the bird to imagine that his challenger was making off in a funk. The use of the faint pipe confirmed this view of the situation, and maddened with passion, either pugnacious or amorous, the duped quail rushed blindly into the net at the quailer's feet. The golden plover, flying low at night, were taken in long nets set up on stakes right across a fen-ground.

The pike and other coarse fish were captured in bow-nets set in the dykes and engine-drains, or snared with a wire loop; and the figure of a man with a leaping-pole in one hand and a spear in the other, on the quest for eels, was often seen parading the sides of the dykes.

In the winter we went after wild-fowl, ducks, widgeon, teal. These birds frequented the flooded rivers and "washes"—i.e. the wide flats bordering the rivers, and the banks raised to prevent the flooding of the fen-land. There were some famous ones, called the "Hundred-

foot Washes," stretching for miles between the embankments of the Old and the New Bedford Rivers, the "cuts" by which the Ouse was conducted in a straight line of many miles from Earith towards King's Lynn, above which town it was joined by the old stream of the river, swelled by its junction with the Cam. In ordinary weather the upland waters of the Ouse passed down the New Bedford River; but in wet seasons and in winter the sluices at Earith had to be drawn and the flood allowed to find its way into the "washes," which would be under water for weeks. On to these washes and rivers, in the cold hours of dawn, the little gunboats paddled out, each with its long duck-gun pointed ahead, the stock butting against the shoulder of the gunner, who lay stretched at full length on the flat bottom of the boat, with his arms over the side paddling, and his eyes looking along the barrel. A bunch of sedge was sometimes fastened on the bow, which concealed the low boat coming "end-on" up to the floating birds. Cold and anxious moments these were; the sun, not yet risen, would be just lighting up the mists that hung along the fen-land, and what had to be done must be done before he was well over the horizon. Those in the boats, however, were not the only fowlers abroad at this early hour; behind the banks, in their long fen-boots, were the wild-fowlers with hand-guns. If these men showed themselves on the banks, the birds took alarm and were off in safe flight; so a compact prevailed, the terms of which were that those on land should find the heavy charges for the long duck-guns in the boats which had the first shot at the bunch of birds. All that the discharge killed dead or that could be picked up by the boat, the paddler took; while the wounded were left

to the mercy of the hand-gunners, who finished them off as best they could.

The bittern was then almost extinct—drainage and cultivation had made away with his sanctuaries ; but I once saw a lad in the fen carrying a dead one over his shoulder, which he told me had just been shot by his father.

In the bogs and water-splashes of the half-drained wastes, or “summer lands,” there was still fair snipe-shooting. In days gone by the tale of the bag was not rendered in numbers, but by measure, and it was good sport for a party to kill a peck. My best day of fen sport was most unexpected. It was on a very close, hot third of September that I was on the point of starting off for partridges, when a message was sent me that the Hundred-foot Washes, ten miles off, were full of snipe. There had been some wet weather and a full moon. I could rely on the information, and lost no time in driving with my brother and a friend down to the spot. Here we tied the horse up against a willow stump and stepped out on the wash. The snipes zigzagged up at every step ; the air seemed full of them. One or two other guns were out, and several fenmen snaring the birds in springs about as fast as we shot them. They begged of us not to molest them as poachers ; being poachers ourselves, we magnanimously consented. The day was so close and hot that I shot in my shirt-sleeves, and found an hour’s occupation in an osier holt, where I was caught, without any shelter, in a terrible thunder-storm and drenched to the skin. The large white convolvulus, or “bind-weed,” justified its popular name by stretching from osier to osier and lacing them together. As the osiers were well grown and about eight feet high, they

offered a supple but effectual hindrance to progress, and I found that to get on I must cut my way through the ropes of bind-weed with my pocket-knife. This I did, but it required some skill and quickness to "stop" the snipe as they jerked themselves up to and along the very top leafy twigs of the osiers. There were many misses, but enough kills. Out of and along thatholt I came away with a bunch, strung on an osier, of snipes—full birds, no jacks, one green shank, three ruffs and reeves, and a "Jerusalem" snipe, the large, solitary sort. When I picked this bird up he was so fat, the day so hot, and his fall so heavy that my hands and wrists were smeared with grease. Towards evening the birds seemed to be moving away, and on the next day only a straggler or two or a wounded cripple could be found. Barring the day on which I killed my first stag, this was the most eventful for sport that I ever enjoyed. On the whole, there was more real sport in it, as I have always regarded stalking with a first-rate stalker as no great strain on one's muscles, and the finale as not more heroic than putting a bullet from a Winchester rifle into the head of a Texan ox in a Chicago stock-yard. In the evening of this third of September, after dinner, my friend, who had been wild with the day's excursion, retired for some time to a writing-table, squared his elbows, and became very silent over some sheets of letter-paper. I asked him what he was about, and he replied, "Writing to *The Field* newspaper." With his permission, I was granted a sight of the manuscript, which, as I expected, was a narrative of his prowess, a record of the bag, and a minute description of the exact locality where such free sport could be enjoyed. I put it in the fire, not seeing the good of informing the readers of *The Field*

where they might kill snipe without having anything to pay.

The fen-waters which attracted the wild-fowl were in one locality (Mepal), famous for smelts ; not the little gudgeon things now on the market, but fine fellows the size of a herring or small mackerel. When just caught, they had the fragrance of a cucumber. I believe nowhere else are these fish caught of such a size, and that the entire take of them is monopolised by one fishmonger in Bond Street.

There was a queer little bird I sometimes came across in the Midlands, the dotterel, not easily got at unless you were acquainted with their failing, which was insatiable curiosity stirred by strange objects. They appeared in the spring in little flights of half a dozen or so on the open fields. Taking my gun, I would get within their view and then hang head downwards over a gate with my legs in the air like a semaphore, or go into contortions on the ground. This soon brought the inquisitive little creatures round about within gun-shot. They are excellent eating cooked like snipe.

About this time the Fen Commissioners undertook the scouring out of the old channel of the River Ouse, otherwise the "Ow" West River. St. Audrey's (St. Etheldreda's) Causeway crossed it at that time by an old wooden bridge, now removed. As it had been the ancient entrance by land to the Isle of Ely, it had been the scene of many a conflict from the days of the Roman Settlement to those of the Norman Conquest. In the mud under and near the bridge was found an eight-oared canoe, hollowed out of a solid oak trunk, in very fair preservation ; it was removed and placed along the side of the parish church, where the sun and rain soon put an end to it, not, however, before I had seen it.

Together with the canoe were found flint celts and arrow-heads, Roman weapons, and others of a later date.

The fens are rich in the traces of pre-historic man. Their burial-places are on the summits of the low sand-hills, where the square cist, unlined with slabs of stone, was carefully cut in the hard dry sand, and the body tucked in it in a sitting position, with the knees drawn up to the breast-bone. A poorly baked burial-urn, formed by thumbing up the clay (the potter's wheel not being in use), was frequently found with the body. Here also occasionally appeared the tremendous horns of the contemporary ox. In a neighbouring fen the skull of one was found, the forehead still transfixed by the celt by which the animal met his death from the vigorous hand of one of our forefathers. In a fen-ground near one of my farms an extraordinary find was made of bronze weapons and fittings. Over four dozen of spear-heads came to light, many of them quite perfect, but no two alike either in size, shape, or pattern. With these were long bronze (14-inch) ferrules and perforated knobs the size of a walnut, as well as wide bronze tips probably belonging to leather or skin straps. Again, in another spot some of my men were "feying" out a dyke, when they came on a leaf-shaped bronze sword in excellent preservation, the edge as keen as it was two thousand years ago. I nearly cut my fingers in lifting it off the ground.

Then, later on, there is evidence that history was anticipating itself and that the Romans were carrying on a barter trade with the British fenman, no doubt for beaver furs, for the tooth of the beaver is ever present under the fen-peat. Large and deep excavations were in progress in the next parish, in order to obtain the

deposit of coprolite in the green-sand subsoil. This was reached by removing twelve feet of the black fen-earth. When the men came early to their work one day they found a great "colch," or slip, had taken place during the night, and brought down with it a very ample service of Roman pewter dishes and plates, together with glass-case bottles and ware, and many common coloured glazed beads as large as marbles, which, I conjecture, were there for the purpose of barter. With these was a pointed oak stake, split out of the heart of a tree. My imaginary scene, then, was this: The spot, which was close to the "highland" shore-way of a mere, was a landing-place, the stake being there for securing the boats or canoes, when some catastrophe or violence had brought the whole equipment to grief, and it had been abandoned and submerged in the mere. The reduced vestiges of the mere were still there not long before I was born, but now artificially drained away.

The aquatic flora of the fen dykes and rivers is singularly beautiful and interesting. The *utricularia*, or bladder-wort, a lovely little flower, and the aloe-like *stratiotes*, or water-soldier, are both found near Ely. The *hottonia*, or water-primrose, adorns most of the dykes with a tall spike of delicate pink flowers, and a graceful yellow water-lily is not uncommon in the still undisturbed backwaters of the sluggish rivers. The tall reed was cut in the washes and meres and used as thatching, the universal covering of cottage and barn roofs. The cottages were very generally built of wood frames filled in with wattle on which the plaster was laid; this had an annual outside whitewashing at the time of the village feast. There were occasional brick ovens, and, in every house, a capacious earthen-ware pot to hold salt pork.

The bread was made from the "gleaning," a very valuable addition secured by the women and children for the household stock. They could gather two or three pounds' worth in the harvest, for all was cut with the sickle or hook, and no horse- or hand-rake could clear up the litter after the harvesters. The gleaners were started altogether from the village by the ringing of a bell, and this summons did not sound until time had been allowed for the completion of household duties. Then the troop hurried away, together with much "clack" and badinage.

The bread, the butter, and the salt pork were excellent—could not be better; and great economy was observed in cooking. The man's dinner was prepared in this way. A blanket of plain dough was rolled out, a piece of fat salt pork was lapped up in it, together with a potato or perhaps a small apple and part of an onion; then the dumpling was boiled. The husband, coming home from work for supper, had this handed him on a plate, but only to contemplate in its integrity; the wife brought the knife and fork, cut the dumpling open, removed the piece of pork in a basin, and shut it up for safety in the cupboard, leaving the dough, the potato, the onions, and all the abundant gravy on the plate. This soon disappeared, to be followed by a pipe and bed before the candle was alight. The next day the cold pork with a hunch of bread and an onion went afield in the man's "satchel," and formed his substantial "dockey," or "thumb-bit," at half-past nine or ten o'clock. He made his own breakfast in the house at about five o'clock in the morning. He left off work at six, unless he was at piece-work, draining or "claying," for which he stripped to his shirt and went

off home by four o'clock. The wife was then expected to have the dumpling done to a turn, and, in front of the peat fire, his slippers, into which her lord and master thrust his tired feet after removing the heavy fen-boots, and unbuttoning his breeches at the knees. No fen-labourer wore trousers in those days or worked in broad-cloth.

My most powerful labourer, a man six feet high and of a breadth in proportion, always ready for the hardest work, draining or claying, had for his little wife Maria ("Ria," we called her), the village gossip and chatterer. "Up and down town," she was always at it. A very noisy wrangle over a parish charity on one occasion took up her time and attention so entirely that the dumpling went out of her mind. Her husband, finding no dinner ready, took off his leather waist-strap, and with no questions asked, "gave" it Ria soundly. She retaliated in "tongue-banging," and subsided into tears. The next morning the strap was missing, and a red cotton handkerchief had to take its place as a belt. On the husband's return he found the fire bright, a clean tablecloth, a cheerful, forgiving wife, and an extra large dumpling smoking under his nose. The poor fare of yesterday doubled his appetite. With no loss of time or grace said, watched all the time by little Ria, who stood opposite with her hands on her hips, a wicked look in her eyes, and, parted lips, he gave one greedy slash of the knife; the dumpling came apart, and out rolled the missing strap, dry and destroyed. Now says Ria, "You gave me the strap yesterday, and I am giving it to you to-day, and hope you will like the taste of it." That was bad enough for the poor fellow, but nothing to what followed, when Ria had informed the

neighbours of how she "had taught her John to give her the strap." Ria survived her husband some years. When too feeble from age to parade the streets with her "clack," she would stand or sit in her cottage doorway with her feet on the footpath, and retail all the local scandal she could collect or invent to passers-by, stopping the horsekeepers with their teams to listen to it. Many a time did she pull me up, to hear her tale of distress: how "them Guardins" had no hearts, and expected a poor widow to live on the smell of a red herring, and pay rent out of it as well; and she would like to know where they expected to go hereafter.

My foreman was a beautifully made, swarthy little man, with small hands and feet, open forehead and splendid teeth, short black hair and eyes, with gipsy blood in his veins, and as quick and powerful as a fox-terrier. He could neither read nor write; he therefore never forgot his instructions or the right time for doing business. He was, of course, first-rate with horses ("meres," as he called them all, irrespective of sex). When the day was over and he came in to report, he had something of the appearance of a Red Indian on the warpath. Bits of string would be dangling from his buttons, and pieces of straw looped in the buttonholes down one side and up the other. Then he would begin in this style, with the top string in his finger and thumb. "That 'ere mere Dapper, she ain't foaled yet," and out went the string. Then, going down one button, "We ain't quite 'disannulled' the muck-hill in ten acres; I laid out to do it, but one of your old carts broke down." Away with another straw. Then, still going down with his nervous hand, "The 'baws' [boys—that is, men] are talking about a shilling more next month."

No one, it should be explained, is a "boy" on the farm till he has come of age. Typical "boys" in the fens are from sixty-five to seventy-five years of age; but shepherds, horsekeepers, thatchers, drillmen, and threshers were generally referred to by their distinctive title. So the strings and the straws were removed, one by one, down the sleeve, waistcoat button-holes on the left side, down the left leg gaiter, up the right leg and waistcoat buttons. When all were littered on the carpet, the head would be scratched for any point that might not have been stringed or strawed. Then came some opinions on the look of things in general, ending almost invariably with sarcasms on the lawyers: "Them chaps that sit at high desks with pens behind their ear, scratching their heads for a lie." The little man had married Rachel at the chapel, a devout lady with a tangle of yellow hair like a German frau of singularly unattractive features. A better wife, a more saintly creature or a more industrious, never lived. Anything so unlike Ria it would be impossible to conceive. They had one feature, however, in common—an untidy dress. Ria was born for village life, Rachel for a solitude, where the stillness was only broken by the lark, the peewit, and the cuckoo on the common, by her own numerous, sturdy children indoors, and by the geese, turkeys, and poultry under her charge for rearing at so much per head.

Their home and the homestead was in the middle of a waste and common of 1,300 acres, on a farm which, with three others, made up an enclosed square of 400 acres of "Adventurers' land," Bedford Level Corporation land that is, awarded to the Adventurers in the days of Charles I. for their great recovery works, which included a bank and dyke round the enclosure,

and a drain five or six miles long to remove the stagnant water. This it did effectually from the higher portions of the farms, thus making the common into "summer land," with the exception of the lower portion, where peats were dug, leaving pools never dry at any time. There were some forty or fifty acres of this farm too low for natural drainage in wet times, so a windmill was erected with a scoop-wheel to lift the water out of the mill drain over the bank to the outside dyke. It was on the common hard by that a man, picking his way by moonlight, nearly trod on some glittering object at his feet. It was the end of a splendid gold "torque." He dug it out with his knife, and became the finder of a relic for the mere gold of which a silversmith gave him £50. It is now, I believe, in the British Museum. A Roman pottery commencing on the common ran for nearly a mile down the farms, and, when the fen was enclosed and cultivated, much broken pottery came to light, with the patterns of hard polished red-ware and the Roman potters' names stamped at the bottom. There were, with these, various potters' implements—polishing stones, querns for grinding the "slip" and the foreign material of which it was composed, a few coins, but no bricks. These large works seemed to be confined to the production of pottery alone. It must have been a busy scene, with its multitude of workers and the kilns all alight—a strange contrast to the quiet common and fen, with only one old house on it and the foreman's family to people 1,700 acres.

About the year 1840 a catchwater drain was carried all round the fen, by which the surface water of the surrounding high land was intercepted from flooding the low land and passed away to the River Cam. Before

this a small flat-bottomed boat had to be used to reach the foreman's house in rainy times, and to prevent its floating away and to have it handy, it was attached to the latch of the door by a short bit of cord. His farm was a fine one, costing £70 an acre to buy and producing wonderful crops of wheat and oats. It took some strength of team and carts to carry off the threshed produce. Now all is changed. The whole fen has been enclosed, the drainage made complete, and a railway goes down its middle with two stations on it; but with all this the value of the old farm has declined 50 per cent., and the poetry and picturesque are civilised away.

It was a trying time to the placid, humble wife who had never even been in the market town, four miles away, who knew nothing more of the world than she could gather from her Bible and the packman who paid an annual spring visit with material for her needle and knitting. Once a week, when the fen was passable and the reaped corn in shocks dotted all the arable, she would make her husband and the little ones pick their way with her to the Baptist Chapel, for which the same best bonnet served her all her life. She might delay for five minutes when the "chapelers" buzzed out of the little Bethel into the town street, while her husband made off to the Chequers for his pint and pipe; and then, with her soul full of religious fervour, her hand resting on a clean, folded white handkerchief, as was the way with pious "chapelers," she would gather her brood round her skirts, the very skirts in which she was married, and get back over the fen before the light faded away, and so to bed without waste of candle, leaving the flint and steel in the tinder-box on the window-

ledge for her husband, whose latest hour of return might be seven o'clock.

Oh! that dear woman's knowledge of the Old Testament and patching was thorough. If the Old Testament has not gone out of favour in the cottage now, patching has. Rachel's quilt was all squares like a chess-board, and the polygonal insertions in the boys' clothes replaced most of the original material. She never read a newspaper. The "keeping-room" floor was of plain brick, uneven with age, and, in spring, was in possession of a hen or two with their broods of chicks. Occasionally a pullet came in cautiously and silently to lay, which achievement over, she rushed out to proclaim the event, leaving the rooms in a sleepy silence, broken only by the regular tick of the grandfather's clock and the low, monotonous cluck of the brooding hens.

The little swarthy foreman's orders had to be obeyed, and as an expert he led the way in most of the operations, his hand ever on the plough, the drill, or the hoe, never on the pen or book. When the wooden beer-bottles were in the rickyard, the conversation on the stack became lively and sparkled with flashes of wit. As I stood at the foot of the ladder on a hot harvest day, this was what passed above. I had bought a handsome cart-mare, and one of the "boys," who had been sent to fetch her, was expected every minute to return. A noisy discussion arose as to what name was to be given her. One shouted "Depper," another "Smiler," another "Black-bird." At last, at the suggestion of the stacker, "Beauty" was decided on. Upon this the foreman, who had taken no part in the talk, interposed in a loud remonstrance, "I won't have no 'mere' called 'Beauty' on this farm; 'Beauty's' the name for a woman, not a cart-

mere." This was a very positive and disturbing interdict after the name had been voted ; a rather sullen silence ensued, which, however, was cruelly broken by the wit of the gang remarking, " You didn't think of that, Joe, when you married Rachel ! " This was much applauded by all except Joe, after which nothing was heard but the rustle of the warm sheaves as the stacker kneed them into their proper position.

The aspect of the village in 1842 and the subsequent changes were as striking as the aspect of the open field and its conversion into enclosures. There was one long street running east and west on a most fertile ridge of land some sixty feet above the level of the surrounding fen. The church stood at one end of the street, the Beristead, or Manor House, and its curtilage at the other. Between the two on either side were the homes of the people, with one old-fashioned public-house and at intervals small yards and sheds for cattle. A butcher (chiefly for excellent pork), a wheelwright, two bakers, a cobbler, and a tailor made up the shops ; very many of the cottages had excellent fruit gardens at the back. A labourer paying fourteen pounds rent for house and garden would sell sixty pounds' worth of plums from it in a favourable year. These little people loaded two wagon loads of fruit a week to go by road all the way to Covent Garden. The staple produce was green gooseberries, black currants, and a variety of plum named the " Wheatens," because its yield was gathered in harvest time. These gardens never required or had any manure. I have known them for over sixty years, and, with the exception of black currants, their yield has not decreased.

In addition, there were half a dozen important homesteads standing back from the streets, with conspicuous

barns thatched with imperishable reed. Here, when all the folk were afield and the whole place still, one could hear the solid thump of the flail. Haulm walls, built of stubble, enclosed the yards. There was a cart-stable with a hatch door opening into a yard, and a crib in the middle for fodder, for the horses never lay in at night. The big double barn doors opened into another yard, and let in the warm sun on the threshing-floor with its golden scatter. A high hatch-board shut off the pigs constantly routing up the abundant litter, and over this board, ever and anon, the thresher put out the sweet straw, fresh and fragrant from the flail. The horned stock enjoyed this browse, standing in the winter sun to pick it over. In a convenient spot was the hand-pump, and here and there the drinking-troughs which it supplied. If the crop under the flail was beans, the shepherd paid frequent visits to the thresher, complaining of "ne'er a bean being left in the coshes for the poor yowes." The man of the flail retorted that the gaffer had been at him this very morning feeling the coshes and threatening to sack him off next Saturday if he did not thresh cleaner. "What was a chap to do?" Some of these barns had two threshing-floors, two men working opposite to each other on each floor. If the wage was low, the work was continuous, and under cover, and as it was frequently task work, more money than the average rate of day work could be got out of it by the best hands.

With wheat at the high prices of those times, the temptation to pilfer, with six or seven to provide for, was great. The "satchel," or flag-basket, in which the thresher brought his food could be used for purloining, but a cleverer method was to fill the empty beer-bottle

with grain. As these little hooped kegs held a gallon, a good deal could be brought away under the nose of an inexperienced master. The window of the kitchen or bedroom, however, generally gave a view of the yard and barn door, and the labourer knew that he was possibly being watched. Threshers working bare-headed frequently begged or bought old stove-pipe hats to wear between the cottage and the barns, and these again I have known to go home filled with wheat nervously balanced on the head of the "shrewd forefather of the hamlet."

One of the yards had the Tithe Barn for a shelter on one side. Hither the hated wagon carried out of the field the tithe shocks, every tenth one of the whole harvest. No harvest carting could start until the rector's shocks had been marked. In one fen parish I saw this done by sticking lusty dark docks full of seed on the topmost sheaves of the rectorial tribute. These all went into his barn, and so into his sample and sacks, and, what was even worse, where the tithe-owner sowed his own tithe seed, the glebe became fouled with dock-weeds beyond the possibility of eradication, for hoeing does not destroy this hardy, spike-rooted offender. To do that, every plant must be pulled up by hand and burnt. Even then, old labourers declare, their ashes will grow. It is a fact that in walking over some parishes you could tell when you were crossing glebe land by the abundance of docks, while in the next field hardly a score could be found.

The Rectory Farm was close to the church; the tenant occupied the Rectory. His house was a frame house, constructed, that is, in frames of oak, filled in with lath and plaster, and the chimney was a huge one of red brick. The timber had come out of large ecclesi-

astical buildings formerly standing on the spot. Here Henry VII. paid a week's visit, but all the old house of that date, except the foundation and the cellar, had been long cleared away. The foundations, when bared, exactly coincided with a plan of the buildings in the British Museum.

At the Manor Farm the tenant occupied one wing of the Beristead. The large area, about three acres, covered by buildings, as well as the curtilage, surrounded with an imperishable wall built of soft red brick, topped by a heavy coping, bespoke the importance of the holding; while the large square dove-house, with its high-pitched tiled roof and wide cantilever eaves, bore witness to the old seignorial rights of the manor. Hundreds of doves, blue rocks, darted in and out of the sort of wooden cupola at its summit, or went away in a flock to the open field for food among the grain crop. They were privileged birds, manorial robbers. No inhabitant, certainly no copyholder, could kill or maim one but at the risk of the law. No one could keep doves, blue rocks, within the limits of the manor; but fancy pigeons, stay-at-home birds, never making the wide, rapacious excursions of the swift blue rock, were permitted. These little robbers had, however, a bad time of it between "haysel" (haytime) and harvest, when they had to content themselves with the ripened seed of the field grasses. As the doggerel proverb expressed it:

When the doves "a-benting" go,
That doth work the dove-house woe.

Sacks of seeds and poor tail-corn were then thrown down for them, but it was considered illegal or against custom to place sheaves of corn inside the dove-house

or cakes of old mortar and salt to attract doves from other manors at this trying season.

The manor barn, thatched with reed, was the largest building in the neighbourhood, though it had but one threshing-floor; but its bays were most capacious, and would hold the better part of the barley crop. As this was thrown off the harvest carts, a huge cart-horse was being continually walked over the top of the mow to tread it down, and there was some ado to get him down when the mow was full up to the eaves.

In the centre of the Beristead, between the two bold, projecting wings, was the hall, or court-room. Here hung the Royal arms of Elizabeth, of embossed leather, of true heraldic colours and quarterings, with the dragon as one of the supporters, most magnificent. The lion, with teeth and claws to dream of, pawing the shield, turned his menacing head full face to you as if he was snarling at Spain, and made you think of the Armada. On one side was the red rose of York, on the other the white of Lancaster, the whole in a suitable frame of the period. Under this insignia, 300 years after it was first displayed in the court, precisely the same proceedings are being carried on in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The lord's steward is there with the rolls and minute book, the courts leet and courts baron are held as of old, the jury summoned and in their places to see equity and law observed, fines for admission are fixed (for here the fines were arbitrary), and the tenant, sometimes represented by his attorney, is "admitted," thus acquiring the title to his copyhold estate. Quit-rents are paid, and, before the date of the enclosures, encroachment on the common-ways reported and set back. The bailiff and pinder, if required, are

present, and the customs of the manor not allowed to fall into desuetude. All this was then in marked contrast to the practices and rule of the Church of England at the other end of the village. There were all the evidences of neglect and disregard of duty. The officiating clergyman, a curate's curate, non-resident and feeble-minded, stammered so that he could not get through the Lord's Prayer without a struggle, and his recital of the service was nothing but a long attempt, ending in painful vocal gulps entirely unintelligible. Not a soul ever attended the service, except a few children with their devoted teacher. She, without any reward, with no ambition, her services unrecognised, week after week came, through all weathers, from an adjacent village, Bible and Prayer Book in hand, a very missionary to the village children. She left in time to marry and has long passed to her rest, but not before my mother and sister, at last residents, had become her fast friends and supporters.

The first time I went to church I reached the porch before eleven, the "Tantony" bell (St. Anthony's bell) still tinkling out its final summons to an unresponsive populace. No one appeared; the long "town street" was empty, except where a few bearers of the Sunday dinner were to be seen hastening with the dish to the baker's oven. At last the clerk dropped the bell rope, and coming out, said to me that if I would go in they would begin. So I marched into the old canopied manor pew, something like an omnibus off its wheels, raised two steps above the floor of the building, as indeed were the rest of the pews, all of them then as empty as eggshells. The tracery and mullions of the large windows were decaying and broken away; much of the glass

was out, and where sufficient had gone to justify the work, panels of brickwork were inserted. The fine oak screen, which once was canopied by a rood-loft, was whitewashed. The leaden roof leaked, and the walls were patched with green dampness. Mercifully there had been no attempts at architects' restoration; all the possibilities of a fine derelict remained for future work. There were some fine brasses in the church; an ecclesiological society, becoming informed of this, was inspired with the desire of appropriating them. Fortunately, my mother, seeing a hack carriage at the church door, went in and found two members of the society, tools in hand, in the very act of wrenching off the brasses, and interdicted the sacrilege. It was impossible to fold one's hands or remain tongue-tied over this state of things. I got appointed churchwarden, and cast about for a remedy. Just at that time the courts had decided, in the famous Braintree case, that, on the report of the churchwardens to the Archdeacon of church dilapidations, that officer (after personal inquiry) might issue a monition to the churchwardens to make a compulsory rate and carry out the needed repairs and restorations. With my brother-officer, a resolute farmer, I lost no time in availing myself of these powers, had plans and specifications drawn, and an estimate made for entire new stone tracery, glazing to all the windows, and for the repair of the lead roof and other work. The Nonconformists were naturally roused to resistance. Their leader, a charming, old-fashioned family representative of the oldest parish land-owners, went off to take legal advice. He returned on his trusty cob in a wind that tore his black frock-coat open, with his high hat retained on his head by a

red handkerchief tied over its top, and slowly rode down the "town street" groaning out, "We must pay!—we must pay!" So the great work was commenced and finished with much alacrity, and within about a year the Braintree judgment was reversed on appeal. No harm or ill came of the transaction, nothing but good; the parish church was saved, a great indecency wiped out, and this example was followed, by way of rivalry, by the erection of a substantial brick meeting-house or chapel where none had hitherto been. There remained, however, the greater scandal of the incompetent minister to be removed; this, after repeated interviews with the ecclesiastical powers, was happily accomplished.

In these primitive days land and cottages were sold in the public-house by the "pin-in-the-candle." Auctioneers and duties were thus avoided. I watched the disposal thus of about eighty pounds' worth of real estate. The coming sale was "cried"—that is, proclaimed—"down street" to come off in the evening at the public-house. Chairs and benches were placed round the best room, to say nothing of jugs and mugs on the table; in the centre of this was a rushlight having a pin passed through its wick, about two inches below the top. The effect of this introduction is that on the rushlight burning down to the pin, the flame is suddenly put out. The company collected and the jugs were filled to order, the vendor expatiated on the value of the lot, gave an oral abstract of his title and revealed its encumbrances, every one of which was perfectly well known to the whole company. Questions, however, were put, every defect and disadvantage made the most of, and many conjectural ones suggested. Then the rushlight was

lighted, the room became full of tobacco smoke, the mugs were filled, emptied, and again replenished, and, the flame being about an inch above the fatal pin, the first bid was made, ridiculous in amount, and in a tone of indifference. At first no regard was paid to the candle-stick, and no one spoke, but all smoked vigorously. Meanwhile, the flame had got within a quarter of an inch of the pin, and a voice doubled the first offer. This caused excitement and attention. Speculation became contagious, boots were nervously scraped on the floor, and here and there a chair drawn forward. The persistent flame was nearing its destroyer. Was the last bidder to acquire the estate? One, two, three advances in half-crowns were made; the atmosphere, though smoky, became nervous; eyes glittered, melted tallow bathes the pin. Ah! one more bid, and simultaneously the light disappears. A deposit is paid, no other formalities, and the mental strain of the last few seconds is relieved by replenished jugs and beakers of brandy and water for the purchaser and vendor.

At that time there was much more field work undertaken by women than now. At one time I had a woman as horse-keeper; she looked after a team of four. For some years she had disguised her sex and undertook the duties of a bargee, directing the horses on the river-bank as they dragged the large keels loaded with corn from Cambridge to Lynn. She dressed like a man, in gaiters and boots and tarpaulin hat, and her real personality seems not to have been suspected. She had, however, abandoned breeches and gaiters for kirtle and smock when I came across her. She could do anything with a horse, ever gentle with them and kind to all animals. She had been

"Tom" on the river, she was "Poll" on the farm, where she married a splendid workman who treated her badly. An Amazon with a reaping-hook, she and her husband had no equals in the harvest-field. Other women confined themselves to hoeing, haymaking, milking, wurzel pulling, loading and cleaning, going "woolling," and spinning what they gathered into twist, with which they made first-rate mops. In spring everything was abandoned for gooseberry picking—a punishing job, for the sharp thorns pricked the fingers unmercifully, so that at the end of a long day you would see many a picker seated on the doorstep, soaking her hands in a basin of warm water to get "the inflammation out."

The women were, as a rule, excellent butter-makers, for many of the husbands had a cow with a right of common on the rich grass "ways." There were no less than twenty-one of these cow owners; for winter food and fodder they relied on the fine wurzel crops and straw which they grew on strips of fen-ground; these there was no difficulty in renting, and if the farmer would not lend his team, they could, at a pinch, be ploughed with one horse. Flags could be cut, as a gift, out of the dykes for litter. Some "fleaks," or hurdles, thatched with reed, set up God knows how, and roofed with a load of haulm, made an excellent warm cowhouse. The pigstye had to be a more substantial building, but there it was, to complete the cottager's homestead. Of necessity, when the enclosure took place, the feeding on the ways was lost; but I arranged to summer the whole twenty-one cows at a joisting rent on the finest bit of old pasture on the estate. One by one, however, the animals were sold

off, and are now reduced to about five, while the stock of pigs is much diminished.

There was a good custom of keeping donkeys by the "little" people, who dubbed the principal land-owners the "great 'uns" (the great ones). Some of the "ways" and all their fen-strips being a mile away from home, the time taken in going on foot to milk and the labour of carrying home the full pails was avoided by enlisting the "moke" (donkey), with a stiff pad saddle on his back, and a strong yoke-bar over it, notched at each end, from which the bright tin pails swung by their handles. The milker rode astride behind on the animal's rump, and it was a joyous sight to see them disappearing at a gallop, in the blaze of the setting sun, with glittering reflections between the high ranks of grain that abutted on the emerald-coloured "ways."

In the early summer the sheep were washed in the river; a few weeks later those bipeds who had had the "call" received their "Baptist dipping" at the same convenient spot. That was an important event of which due notice was given. On one occasion the engineer of a large fen pumping-engine lower down stream was observed to be engaged in carrying a supply of water indoors. On being asked the meaning of this very singular operation, he said with a serious face, "There's to be a 'dipping' to-morrow, and my missis don't intend to drink all their sins as may drift down here."

The varied size of the farms seem to me to have been a very fortunate and happy feature. About half the parish, fen and highland, belonged to our family. Next came owners of from one to three hundred acres,

descending in scale to little freeholds and copyholds of from forty acres downwards, and in some instances to holdings of fractions of an acre. Most of the land was occupied by the owners, certainly all the smaller estates, and through all the years of terrible depression succeeding 1879, this rural community dealt with its difficulties in a singularly courageous and uncomplaining way. A renting tenant may cry down the value of his holding with the prospect of thus obtaining a reduction of rent. The occupying owner has every reason not to "crab" his own acres, however poor the profit from them. The population in this parish has not declined. Early hours, plain living, and a suitable working dress still prevail; but the women have in a great degree left off field work for wages, though still coming out to help on the small family property, or, failing that, on the allotment. They can earn half a crown a day readily at fruit picking, but gleaning is a thing of the past; the self-binder and horse-rake clean all up, leaving only a little "shack" for the pigs.

Surely the absence of a rural exodus here may be attributed to the simplicity of the people's lives and habits, and that again to the subdivision of property from which their bread and living had to be wrung. Tilling the earth still remains their main business, though the fruit and their splendid horses really may be said to enrich them. There was a tight time for the "great uns" when the agricultural labourers' strike gained head, and the "agitator" came among us; but though the Press filled their columns with reports of the labourers' meetings, the farmers excluded the reporter from their gatherings, and so for want of controversy in type, interest in the movement died out, and with some very desirable

rise of wages, work went on as usual. In one fen parish, however, all belonging to one owner, be it observed, I knew of twenty pair-horse plough teams standing idle in the yards, without a man to put the collars on.

There has been much rigmarole in print about the general rural exodus in England ; as a matter of fact, it is not confined by any means to England. No doubt the low profit and the many losses experienced in farming must keep down the rate of money payment for labour, but in the country there are notable compensations in cheap rent and wholesome living. It strikes me that the movement may be accounted for in large measure by the feeling of surveillance, and perhaps patronage, ever present in close parishes, where the clothing club and coal club meetings are the occasion for discussing the private failings and domestic peculiarities of the smaller people, followed perhaps by a present of tracts supposed to be conducive to amendment. In the town there is one all-prevailing delightful sense of freedom and escape from "goody-goody" observation. I can illustrate this by some conversation among work-people in which I took part. Some country builder's men were doing bricklaying to a tomb under the direction of a London artisan. Their employer, a village bricklayer and parish clerk, was complaining of the injury his garden suffered from rabbits off another owner's land that abutted on it, and asked me how he could protect himself. "Why, catch them," I said, "or shoot them, if you have a gun and a licence to use it." He shook his head over this and looked very grave. "You've got the Ground Game Act—there's your protection," I added, "and why don't you avail yourself of it? If the rabbits eat up your garden stuff, they're not even your landlord's rabbits." "Oh!"

he groaned, "but I am thinking of my old home, my cottage. Whatever the law may be, if I killed them rabbits, I can't say what might happen." His workmen chimed in with "That's certain sure you could not." The Londoner, who had been fidgeting from one foot to another, here broke silence by exclaiming, "I say, Mr. Clerk, you come to London, and be a free man."

CHAPTER VI

THE MIDLANDS

THE rural exodus has not been confined to the farm labourers, as far as my observation goes. It did not begin with them ; it occurred first among the class above them. In the parish of Hazelbeeche, with a population of 133 people, there were, when I first knew it, a brewer, a butcher, a baker, a shoemaker, a carpenter, a tailor, all with families. Every one of them has left, and no one of their calling sits under the old roof-trees. The beer, the clothes ("slops"), the boots, all come by rail. The grocery comes by traders' vans. The mowing machine, the steam-thresher, the horse-rake, the self-binder, and the elevator, have no doubt ousted the farm hands ; but the population has not declined. The Hall is rented by a wealthy fox-hunting tenant, and stable-helps, grooms, house-servants, and gardeners make up the number of the old inhabitants in the persons of a different class.

Sixty years ago this parish boasted even of musicians. A bass viol, a violin, and clarionet accompanied Tate and Brady's metrical version of the Psalms and old-time hymns in the Church services. These have long been displaced by an organ and "Hymns, Ancient and Modern." The congregation was boxed up in pews ; mine was a superior pew, lined with green baize fastened to it with brass-headed nails. The lower part of the window was filled in with brickwork, so was one clere-story light, while the stone tracery of another was removed

to make way for a domestic sash window. There was no artificial heat. The family of the late squire were stored away in their lead coffins in a sorry vault or grave excavated close to one of the pillars of the arcade. This caused it to give way, and iron bands were put round it, to save it and the north arcade from coming down. The Essex churches were most noticeable for pews. A very witty friend told me that as a girl she and her father used to visit an old-fashioned squire who kept to the Essex fashion in dress—drab breeches and gaiters, and a green coat with brass buttons. There was, of course, the family pew, lined with green baize and studded with brass-headed nails, and brown rush hassocks to kneel on. Her father, who was short-sighted, followed the squire at some little distance ; the churchwarden opened the Hall pew door for him ; and in the usual church gloom he dropped himself at once on what appeared to him a comfortable broad green seat, set off with some unusually dazzling brass nails. A groan and an upheaval from a prone kneeling figure satisfied him that he was sitting down on the green back of his host, taking his drab gaiters for a hassock. It led to some estrangement between the old friends which was never quite removed.

We had a sensible practice at Hazelbeeche, when I first made it my home. On Easter Monday, after the churchwardens' accounts had been discussed and passed in the vestry, with the usual wrangle over the distribution of a bread dole smoothed away, half a dozen of the principal ratepayers and the parish officers betook themselves to the village public-house for a social dinner of solid roast beef and plum-pudding, followed by punch dark and strong ; and when this had brought us to a sufficiently amiable disposition and warmed our generous impulses, the

chairman proposed that we should make "the Constable's Rate" (why called "Constable's" nobody knows, for it was a voluntary contribution for the catching of moles). We assessed ourselves, not according to our social position, but on the scale of the overseers' valuation. The result was, we had not a mole-cast in our meadows or gardens. Other adjacent parishes did the same, and one old mole-catcher cleared a considerable district. An extraordinary shepherd-dog accompanied him, who seemed to divine the presence of a mole when near the surface, and, pouncing down, would tear him out of his run and toss him dead in the air. The rural exodus has carried that most useful functionary away, together with our highly skilled rat-catcher and his vagabond dogs. He was an active, little, hunchbacked fellow, but a splendid walker, and when he appeared in the distance with his box of ferrets on his hunch, Sinbad the Sailor with the Old Man of the Sea on his back came to one's mind.

Fox-hunting was still the sport of the country gentlemen, yeomen, and farmers. The country was not so full then of "captains," and there was no difficulty over the Hunt fund. The cost of the equipment was estimated at a thousand pounds for each day in the week that the pack went out; for instance, if the meets were, say, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays—three thousand pounds.

Of Dick Webster, the rough rider, I saw a good deal; there was a great rivalry between him and "Cap" Tomalin, of Billesdon. Dick had good old country blood in his veins, and when young was almost a teetotaler. Mr. Vowe, of Hallaton, was his uncle—a fine specimen of Midland stature and character. He rode a correspondingly magnificent horse, which we always spoke of

as his pony. He had a nice family estate, and was of a free, manly disposition, and I regarded his independence and simplicity with admiration. He had not the slightest idea of playing second fiddle to any swell in the field. On one occasion he pushed forward to get through a very clayey gateway at Cranoe in front of a great man with no regard to precedence. Lord Cardigan who was alongside, seeing this, said, "Vowe, Vowe, the Prince!—the Prince! Make way!" "I shan't," says Vowe in a loud voice. "I'll be bound the horse ain't his own." Lord Cardigan has his good-humoured revenge not long after. Vowe took up politics for a while as a violent Protectionist, and attending a great local meeting of this party, he not only signed a petition to the House of Lords, but was persuaded to go to London and hand it to Lord Cardigan for presentation. Feeling the importance of this trust and the necessity of exchanging his country costume for one more in harmony with a political leader in London, he exchanged boots and breeches for trousers and black coat, into the pockets of which he contrived to stuff the important petition. The appointment was made at the House of Lords, where, after some nervous waiting, Lord Cardigan at last appeared, and coming forward to shake hands, spied the bulge in Vowe's pocket, and before he could draw it forth, cried, "Hullo! Vowe, what's that you've got in your pocket? A pork pie, I'll be bound." In summer time we went into the cricket-field together, on the same side fortunately, for when batting, his aim was not as much to guard the stumps as to warn the wicket-keeper off any attempt on the bats. This he did by deliberately swinging his bat round in the plane of the wicket-keeper's head, forcing him to keep a respectful distance away.

The interchange of humour between the jolly riding countryman and the polished man of the world was very amusing. I had two acquaintances in these respective positions, Mr. Topham and Major Whyte-Melville, both hunting with the Pytchley. At the beginning of the season the two met outside the cover, both in new coats. "How are you, Topham?" says the Major. "New coat, I see." "Yes," says Topham; "the same with you, Major, but still, a difference too." "How so?" was the inquiry. "Well, in the cost, you see," says Topham. "Now, I study economy; so I buy enough cloth of the mercer, giving my last year's coat to a village needle-woman. She pulls it to pieces for pattern, and in a week's time brings me the coat I am in, and as good a coat, too, as any one need ride in. The cloth came to 30s. for cash, the making and lining to twelve—two guineas in all. It is not quite so smart, perhaps, as yours, but Heaven only knows what yours cost you. Seven guineas, as likely as not." "Well," says the Major, "let us see. You paid cash for your cloth over the counter, and cash as well to the sempstress; there went two guineas out of your purse. Well, the price of my coat was, may be, seven guineas or more; but I have not paid them, and don't know that I ever shall, so I have the best of it at present."

In the Atherstone I had the late Mr. Newdegate, of Arbury, for a friend, the *beau idéal* of a rather old-fashioned country gentleman, but somewhat unforgiving. There had been a slight difference between him and Lord Curzon, who was master of the Atherstone, about drawing the Arbury covers. There was nothing much in it, and Lord Curzon was the last man to let it rankle in his mind or keep him and Newdegate apart, so, as he told me, he took the opportunity in the

hunting-field of opening a gate in a stiff hedge for him to pass through. Newdegate acknowledged the civility, hat off, with a stiff bow, declined the favour, and put his horse over the hedge by the gate-post at the risk of a serious fall. I had another friend, Anstruther Thomson, master of the Pytchley, when we first knew each other, and formerly of the Atherstone. After the famous Waterloo run, he surprised us by turning up at the Harborough Ball before midnight, having first taken his hounds back to the kennels at Brixworth. Crinolines were then in fashion, and after dancing awhile in all the perils of the hoops, he said to me with his cheerful smile, "I tell you what, this is more dangerous than wire in the hedgerows."

Another celebrity among my friends was Lucas, of Lutterworth, the famous veterinary. He was, I believe, the son of a parson, but took to horses and hunting before he was out of his teens. He was devoted to cock-fighting, and would sit over a cup of tea detailing his experiences. Once, he said, a quiet parson pestered him to give him a game cock to run with his birds, so he rode one afternoon into the rectory yard with the bird in a bag under his arm, and asked for the rector, who was all excitement to see this beauty. The bird was carefully released on the pavement, whereupon, spying a small pig that had crept away from his mother, it flew at him in a moment, and, driving a spur into his eye, killed the suckling on the spot. The gallant bird went back to his old run. These pugnacious birds had to be kept far apart from each other, and that is the explanation of the small, well-built, square brick huts with door and lock that one still sometimes meets with in the grazing-grounds of Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. In these, single

warriors were isolated beyond the reach of cock-crow and challenge from any rival.

Lucas was in great request in the training-stables, and entire reliance was placed in his opinion and treatment. On a summons he would ride off astonishing distances on professional visits. He was a thoroughly independent as well as dependable man, and those who did not understand his high character and put themselves, in a way, on guard against him in his practice were made to feel their mistake. He told me that when Brassey took a contract for the construction of a branch line from Rugby, he wrote asking him to take the veterinary charge of his horses standing at that place, of which there were about forty in the stable. He rode off at once and was soon on the spot. He walked quickly from horse to horse, as was his custom, with no pretence of occult science, but just going up to each animal's head, as if to say "Good morning." Having thus introduced himself to the whole string, he slipped into the office, and calling the horse-keeper in, shut the door. "Now," he said, "you will have to brand each horse's hoof with my numbers, first of all putting up close boarded partitions (stalls) between each pair. The first pair must be numbered 1—2, the next 3—4, and there must be a separate pail for the exclusive use of each pair. No time to be lost over this, and when you let me know that it is done, I will ride over again." The next letter that came was not from the horse-keeper, but from his employer the owner of the animals, written in an offended style "to remind Mr. Lucas that he engaged him as a veterinary surgeon, not to advise his man on stable management." Lucas wrote back that he knew perfectly

what he was about, but as his advice was not of the nature Mr. Brassey anticipated, he trusted he would find some other more skilful person "to doctor the horses." The state of the case was this: Having just put his finger under the left jaw, and found the awful indication there of glanders, he was not going to advertise its presence by any inquiry or statement at the stables; he wanted to stop, as far as he could, the spread of the calamity, and, had he continued in office, would have killed some, got others down coal-pits, and saved as far as it was possible the heavy losses that ensued.

He had a practice of not sending in any account or making any charge for advice to those whom he regarded as acquaintances, and with whom as residents near Lutterworth he had for some time been associated; but he was quick to perceive if an outsider coming down to hunt thought he could take advantage of this disposition. A friend of mine wrote to Lucas asking him to examine his horse in my stable. He came the next day, found nothing the matter, and at once posted an account for the visit with a request for its discharge.

I remember a case in London where a dealer's warranty as to the eye-sight of a horse came in question. Two eminent "vets" differed in their opinion, one holding that the sight was sound, the other that it was imperfect. Neither would yield, and the matter was referred to Lucas for final settlement. He came to the dealer's yard in London, walked round to the horse's head, and ordered a halter to be put on, and an empty stable-bucket to be placed in the middle of the yard. Taking the halter in his hand, he led the animal in a direct line for the bucket. The horse went forward,

and blundered over it with his fore legs. "Blind, without doubt," was the verdict, and blind, though not "stone blind," the creature was, as all bystanders could see.

He disliked casting horses, and could perform some of the severest operations with the horse on its legs.

Some of his friends who for years had benefited by his most valuable advice gratuitously, desiring to present him with some testimonial and acknowledgment of his kindness, raised a private fund for that purpose among themselves, in which, of course, I joined most heartily. Enough came in to warrant us in persuading him with some difficulty to sit for his portrait, and there was, I think, about £500 over. Then came a dinner at Lutterworth, which the subscribers attended with Lucas as the guest. Some excellent punch and a short speech, I think (but I was not present), from a hunting parson was followed by unveiling the portrait of the good old gentleman with his high forehead and fine-cut features; then the balance of the fund in gold was placed in a bag on the table by his glass, and with some more conviviality the meeting broke up; and I was told that Lucas came away with others to the door, leaving the bag where it was on the table. One of the party reminded him that he had not taken up the gold. "Oh!" says he, "that will do for the waiters." At his death I was consulted by others what steps should be taken about his estate and the debts due to it. We found that he had some near relations not over-well off, so decided to have his books examined and the debts got in for their benefit.

The glanders got into the stables on one of the farms I rented, and after an ineffectual attempt to kill it out and disinfect the premises, he advised me to work the

farm with oxen. So I got an introduction to a leading farmer in the Vale of Pewsey, who took me in for a few days that I might join in the ploughing and carting work on the farm, and master the method of dealing with the old English draft-beast, that had held his own, since Saxon times, in the county of Wilts. I was instructed also in the method of breaking them in to harness, and the proper way of making a sulky one who refuses to rise get upon his legs. All sorts of cruelties were frequently practised, such as twisting the tail to the dislocation of the joints, and burning straw under the body as it lay obstinate on the ground, though sometimes these proved ineffectual. The sure method and merciful, which I was taught, was to lie on the ground and shout in the animal's ear, taking care that you escaped harm yourself as he sprang up from the ground. I bought two pair of worked oxen and their harness in the vale and some younger beasts at a fair, and before long had eleven as good animals as one need have, for my business. If the beasts did not give me much trouble, my men did, thinking they were degraded by going to plough with "beasts." However, in time they came to see that, except in the very hottest weather, when their tongues came to hang out, they got through as much work and in as short a time as horses. I worked nothing but Devon cattle, "South Hams," and when I had done with them the graziers bought them for feeding. After a long life's experience in farming, I venture the opinion that in many parts of the country and under some circumstances the ox is preferable to the horse in the plough.

The Midlands in the 'forties differed much from the Midlands of the twentieth century. "Squires, spires, and

mires" predominated. The spires remain; the squires and the mires are features of the past. Some of the villages could not be reached by a metalled road, and at the beginning of the century, as a squire's old pocket-book tells me, the ladies brought the visits to their neighbours to an end at Old Michaelmas, by which time, too, the supply of winter coal had to be laid in. The turnpike roads were made and mended with limestone or gravel, put on in autumn and scraped off, as mud, in winter. The parish roads, where they were metalled, had in autumn after the harvest a coat of pebbles from the field laid on them; the largest only of the pebbles were cracked with a stone-hammer, or, if soft sandstone was handy, that did instead—which ever, in fact, was the easier come at, and the cheaper. The oldest men were to be found engaged as roadmen, pottering over the work when not digging out rabbits or setting snares for them in the roadside hedges. The Elizabethan highways were 60 feet wide, with space for the wayfarer to pick his way dry-shod, and the carter his, without being stalled. The squire's coach-and-four was accompanied by his running footmen with poles to raise it out of any hole into which it might sink.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, as I see from the same old pocket-book, it was the squire's practice to go out of nights with the parish clerk and his setters to net partridges "jugging." The setter, procumbent, after pointing, allowed of the net being drawn over his body, and there is an entry of a woodcock being thus taken on one eventful night. Badgers abounded then, as they do now, near my Northamptonshire home, and the old brick pit-falls in which they were captured, constructed on the steep slopes in

the plantation, are still to be seen. The common people hold that the badger's legs are longer on one side of his body than on the other, to suit his habit of running along the slopes of the hills. One of my men had also the belief that the beast has no breast-bone, and thus, if held up by his hind leg, cannot "turn in his skin." He and I one early morning tracked a badger dragging a trap through the dew for a mile or more. We came up to him at last, entangled in a whitethorn stump. I sent the man off for a sack, and on his return suggested his popping the badger in, while I held the sack mouth open. The innocent, relying on his anatomical convictions, extricated the badger and raised him aloft. In a moment the prisoner "turned in his skin," opened a mouth like a pair of shears glittering with teeth, which, just missing their aim, seemed to close with a snap like a man-trap. Another weary chase followed, but we always had him in view, and at last ran him down; this time we both had due regard to his breast-bone, got the bag over him, and shook him down to the bottom. These creatures seem to have a fondness for young onions, for one spring my bed in the kitchen garden was visited nightly by some large animal, who rolled on the little plants. At last I spotted the spoor in the fine mould, and put netting round the bed to save the crops.

A friend of mine in the Midlands, in Leicester Forest, had got on quite familiar terms with the badgers. His lovely garden of several acres was surrounded by iron fencing. Just outside this, under the wide branches of an old yew, surrounded with scrub and underwood, the badgers had got a capacious earth; here they concealed themselves during daylight, but in the long summer evenings they came forth stealthily in the gloam-

ing. We went with our pockets full of dates, and throwing a handful towards the stronghold, a few white streaks appeared, the rest of the body being quite invisible ; then the warm evening stillness was broken by the cracking of the date-stones within 6 feet of us, which continued as long as we kept up the supply. In the middle of the garden a crag of slate was thrust up like a miniature Matterhorn. The escarpment was bare of vegetation, but the slope was coated with short ling and abundant moss. Up this slope the badgers would climb to the very summit, and then, backing down, would tear out bunches of moss and soft ling with their bear-like claws, rolling the mass up under their bellies till, the pack being made, they seized it in their wide jaws and carried it off to their earth. The accumulation here was so large that at one time a quantity filling the body of a farm wagon was removed. One sometimes sees in summer time ant-hills which have been torn open, and my belief is that this is the work of badgers in quest of ants' eggs. No other British animal has limbs and nails powerful enough for this operation. It is extraordinary how secret these creatures are. Their movements are so stealthy, and are made only at night, when the dark colour of their coats becomes the more indistinguishable by reason of the white streaks in their faces. Lord Stamford's great woods adjoining the earths of which I speak are, no doubt, well peopled with badgers, but his night-watchers and keepers say they never meet with one in their quietest patrols.

The otter is another singularly secret animal, and so his presence is never suspected in a neighbourhood at a distance from quiet rivers and mountain streams, where he leaves proofs of his poaching by the water-side

in a fish with a choice bit of his shoulders bitten out. Yet I have myself known an otter come up the dirty water of a channel, half canal, half drain, into the heart of Northampton, and wander on along the railway to the gashouse. Here he was overtaken by an engine, whose wheel went over his shoulder, and so injured him that he was captured and killed.

An otter is a delightfully amusing pet, and extremely inquisitive ; when indoors he pries into every room, upstairs and downstairs, but has, as a famous sports-woman says, a bad habit of getting up early in the morning, having a bath, if there is one in the room handy, then going up a chimney and returning to get into bed with her mistress. My friend Sir John Lawes, as great a man in sport as in science, had a pair of these animals at Rothamsted. They retired by day to a small pool in the park. It was his custom at one time to drive some miles to the railway-station at St. Albans, taking the train there for London. On his return he never failed to bring back a " bass " of fresh fish for the otters. As the carriage entered the park on the way back to the Hall, the creatures, unmoved by any other traffic, recognised the paces of their master's horses, and coming out of their retreat in haste across the grass, ran ahead of the carriage, jumping up like dogs at the horses' noses till they reached the Hall, when, the basket being emptied before them, they hurried back with their present. Sir John took them up with him to his forest in Scotland, where the pair enjoyed the forest as much as he did, taking themselves off in the evening on fishing excursions in wild Highland waters, to return without fail before daylight. A wretch of a gillie killed the female, whereupon the

disconsolate mate became irregular in his habits, staying out at first for one night, then for two or three, then a week, and finally never came back at all; probably lured away by the enchantments of some wild jade with whom he set up poaching and housekeeping. When staying near Exmouth as a boy, I found the otters frequenting the seaside, their strongholds being far back between the horizontal slabs of the red rock, where a soft vein had been washed away and left the harder stratum overhanging a space just wide enough for the otters' entrance. Often of a morning have I found there the remains of their night's catch of fish. But I am getting ahead in my memories and notes.

The otters (except the Exmouth ones) and the badgers came in my way only in middle age, as did the sweet-marten, the lively little tree-loving bird-catcher of the Lake District, the only place where I have met with it, and even there it is extinct by now, I fear. The fougart (foulmart), even then rare in our Middlesex wood, the weasel, the stoat, and the hedgehog were other animals whose personal acquaintance I made as a boy, and whose manners and customs I was never tired of watching.

In the mid 'forties I married, dressed in puce-coloured kerseymere trousers, straps and Wellington boots, an embroidered satin waistcoat, a blue dress-coat, and brass buttons, and I was not mobbed! * For some months we made our home near Ely in the fen-country, where I settled down seriously to farming as a business. There

* Mr. Pell married Elizabeth Barbara, only daughter of Sir Henry Halford, Bart., of Wistow Hall, Leicestershire. In her own way Mrs. Pell was quite as original and remarkable as her husband, and had the same capacity for endearing herself to her friends. She was a keen and capable farmer, and managed his farms for him while he was

was no Board of Agriculture, but there was genius enough engaged or interested in the industry to help it along. Lawes had been studying chemistry in Paris, Caird was writing a series of invaluable articles in *The Times*. Smith, of Deanston, had taught the sound method of under-draining. Pusey, both in and out of Parliament, was influencing the landowners. Huxtable, the optimist in Holy Orders, was preaching the gospel of turnips and guano. Spencer, Knightley, Bates and Booth, and Torr among the short-horns, and Webb and Ellman and the Duke of Richmond among sheep, were names to conjure with. "The Chronicles of a Clay Farm," by "Talpa" (Wren Hoskyns), animated the owners and cultivators of heavy land, and charmed them into adopting modern though expensive improvements. Labour was cheap, and the farm hand went far afield for employment.

In the fen-country and in the non-residential districts of England the labouring class was fairly distributed ;

busy in Parliament. A friend remarked to her one day that Mr. Pell was a courageous man. "Yes," she replied, "that is why I married him"; and he, for his part, had a similar admiration for her high spirit and independent judgment. One who knew her intimately writes, "She was as well-read a woman as ever I met, and her judgment of men and things was extraordinarily good. Her husband owed much of his success to her, and was saved from many mistakes in public and private life by deferring to her opinion." She adopted the homely ways of a farmer's wife, and went little into society; but her wide reading and interests prevented her from ever being narrow minded. One who proved and appreciated her friendship writes of her, "In some ways there seemed a curious hardness about her, she hated and discouraged tears, but she could on occasion give the best and wisest advice, and inspired the courage and fortitude which she herself practised."

The epitaph which Mr. Pell wrote in her memory sets out with much felicity the principal traits in her character (see Introduction), and is a more adequate tribute to her virtues than anything which can here be written. Mrs. Pell died on January 16, 1894.

but in the Midlands, with its large estates and "close" parishes, with perhaps one man exclusively owning two or more villages, a different state of things prevailed. There the policy of the landlord or his agent was to banish the labourer's family from the fields on which he toiled, and to leave him to find his roof-tree in the adjoining "open" parish, where he had to dwell as best he could on little encroachments on the waysides or in the congested huts of the village. The accursed Law of Settlement and the Poor Laws then in force were responsible for this policy. The fear of the poor rate, when the cost of each pauper's maintenance was charged to the parish in which he lived, and not, as now, on the union, entirely obliterated the sense of duty to one's neighbour.

The hours of farm labour were from six to six. Coming and going was taken out of the labourer's time, not the master's, and a tramp of two, three, or even four miles from home in the morning, and the same back in the evening, was an every-day occurrence, and regarded as a matter of course. The little boy trotted all this way by the side of his father, to lay out pipes or drain-tiles, to spud or hoe weeds, and to scare birds. No statute restricted or regulated the hours of the child's work on the farm, and when in after-life I drafted and carried the first Act of Parliament framed to spare the little limbs, I did it at the risk of my seat. I remember particularly the indignant remonstrances of a neighbouring squire, a most kind friend and active political supporter, the father of a family of about ten children, on whom he doted, and whose happiness and health were his constant care. I asked him how he would tolerate his boys of eight to ten years

of age driving plough on a heavy clay fallow. Did he know what it meant? I thought not. If we suppose that the conventional acre was ploughed between six and two o'clock, the child would have to walk in the blazing sun on a baked soil, or, in wet times, clogged with clay on his feet, from eleven to twelve miles a day (including, say, a mile's trudge from home and a mile back again), directing the movement and stimulating the actions of three, perhaps four, monstrous creatures, who submitted to his presumptuous orders and infantile oaths with slavish docility and soft mild eyes. It was a marvellous sight to see these little dots get a collar on the necks of the plough-teams. First they reached it down from the bracket overhead with a hay-fork, then they hoisted it into the manger, then they scrambled after it themselves, then, drawing the huge animal's head towards them, with much exhortation "to be quiet" and "now then, what are you at?" they lifted the heavy harness over the head and ears on to the neck, and jumped down for the hames. All this was carried out with a very jaunty air of superiority to the other little chaps waiting at the yard-gates for the ganger to take them to the monotonous toil of stone-picking, pulling charlock, or, worse than all, bird-scaring.

An old labourer, a faithful but rough servant, who began money-making as a navvy at Kilsby Tunnel, used to describe to me how at six years of age he was turned out as soon as the birds were up, to scare them from the crops; how he went afield with no bread, no meat, in his canvas bag, but day on and day off with a dumpling made of boiled barley-meal (not oatmeal) and peas. Sometimes father would come

across a rabbit or, better still, a hare, and a bit of that and the gravy was first-rate. When I went to his cottage to engage him, I was cautioned against employing such a ruffian. He had just given up the "tip and the tunnel" and the home in the contractor's bothies or beer-houses, and had put up a shelter for himself, wife, and child on the top of the Kilsby Tunnel. He saw the first ground broken there, and he did not come away till the last brick was laid. He let the bricks down the shaft by contract, the gearing for this being kept in motion by horse-power. Somehow or another, he was licensed to sell beer from the barrel at the shaft. His wife tapped and drew it, and did washing for navvies' Sunday wear. The little boy, only five years old, fetched and returned the change-horses for the winding gear. He rode them to and fro, balancing himself on the withers of the horse, his two tiny legs sticking out horizontally and his fingers clutching the long, handsome mane of the horse. At this feat he earned 4s. a week, and the family came away with over £200 in their pockets. The father added another hundred to this at the next tunnel somewhere in the North; and then, in the third tunnel, he worked with a "butty" who contrived to clean him out of all his capital. So home he, the wife, the boy, and a little daughter came to "his parish," where I heard of him as a neighbour, renowned for great muscular strength, an unlimited capacity for absorbing beer, with a preference for heavy jobs among builders, well-sinkers, and timber-men. Farming work was not to his mind—the pay did not suit him; but he was said to be fond of his garden, could snare a rabbit and milk a cow. The wife was a very pretty little woman, and attracted much attention. When I went with my wife to look him up, he was so

shy that he clambered up to his bed-loft and concealed himself, nor would he reveal himself, so I left my wife to talk matters over with his, and a bargain was struck between them for "the terror" to come and see what he could do. He came, and stayed till death parted us years afterwards. His main failing was drinking. I tried hard to cure him, but in vain. Once I pointed out to him how bread was praised as the "staff of life," how we were bid to pray for our daily bread, and not for beer, and so on, and how I wished he would spend more on the "staff of life" and less on liquor. I had better have left the moralising alone, for he turned on me, like Gladstone, with, "Look here, you may call bread the staff of life, but I tell 'ee beer's life itself." Of course he could neither read, write, nor "sum up," but he could sink a well, drive a headway below ground, mow, reap, thatch, fell a tree, mend his own boots (like George Stephenson), manage potatoes, cultivate a kitchen garden, and grow carnations. Overtime was nothing to him; fortified with tots of beer he never wearied, and worked away in the harvest moon as if it was high noon. This was before the days of field machinery. Without such men the great English crops could never have been gathered and saved, nor even then, had not Ireland come to help. The Irishmen, however, were masters of only one tool, the sickle, not the hook nor the scythe, and were positively dangerous when using a fork. They were quarrelsome and insubordinate. The English nicknamed them "Mickies," and declared that heaven would not be heaven if the Mickies were in it. The Mickies all desired to be locked up at night, safe from the English, and would very often ask the same favour when a strange Irish gang was engaged. It was fatal

to enter into conversation with them. If you did, they became familiar and importunate, and as they were without any exception unreasonable, cunning, and witty, a civil tongue was thrown away upon them. Their last employment before haytime, they always asserted, was in Lancashire, "shaking gwarner [guano] on the pertaters." The men from the far west were the best harvesters, and if you paid them well, locked them up as they desired, and made cooking convenient for them on Sundays, the same gang would come again, sometimes promising their services by post. As the machines came in and the scythe took the place of the sickle, the Irish immigration dwindled away, and the whirr of the gearing supplanted the Celtic chatter. Like Tennyson's rain, theirs was a "useful trouble." When their entire absence became a fact, and no ragged fellow was to be seen with his arms and sickle hanging over the gate of the wheat-field, I, for one, felt the loss with a certain amount of sadness. It was as if death had visited the hurry of the harvest and removed the noisy actors from the rural stage. An American lady, a slave owner on the border of the southern states, whom I visited, described her feelings when, as the northern army drew nearer day after day, the old negro hands failed to return at night, "it was," she said, "as though there had been a funeral"; and distress at her wrecked fortune as an owner and mistress could not annul the sort of family affection that had grown up between her and the slave.

With the year 1847 came the great Irish famine. Subdivision of the land and over-population had been for some years concurrent, fostered and encouraged by the cultivation of one plant as the main means of subsistence ;

when almost without notice, disease, once and for all, as good as destroyed the whole crop. Not in Ireland only, but in the western islands and Highlands of Scotland, the potato putrified, and the people perished by scores, by hundreds, by thousands, and tens of thousands. Prayers, fasts, relief works, meal, and money were of little avail. After it was over, I stood in one graveyard in County Clare, under which 2,000 of the starved parishioners lay. It is a most distressful country, and the ways of its inhabitants are not much advanced beyond those of the Tierra del Fuegians and the Digger Indians. The aboriginal Celt lives (with his pigs) in the rudest of huts, subsists on roots which he digs out of the ground, and looks up with superstitious reverence to his ignorant priests or medicine-men. He wants energy for steady industry. He will not even catch the fish that swarm in the seas surrounding him. Blind to experience, he continues to plant a foreign root, the origin and cause of famine and death. Still, with all this horrible warning, the philanthropist and politician think it expedient and humane to provide him with seed potatoes for his destruction.

As I have said, the famine came in 1847. It was met by a fast day on March 26, and a continuance of potato planting. On May 6 I sold wheat at ninety shillings the quarter; and on June 11 the presence of the potato disease in Ireland was announced. The Angel of Death was descending on that over-peopled country; in less than a year from that day the miserable existence of thousands on thousands of its inhabitants had ended in the pining and suffering of famine and disease. In the Highlands and western islands of Scotland matters were as bad. In Skye the season had been a fine one,

and even there the oats were plump and ripened well. A religious contest, however, animated the people at harvest-time, and the dominant Church faction, to prove its paramount authority, proclaimed a fast, calling the unco' godly from secular duties to religious observances for one whole week. Then it was that, as in the bright autumn sunshine one drove along the excellent main roads in the still and sultry air, and the vibration from the passing vehicles reached the bordering strips of grain, the over-ripe food of the people dropped grain after grain silently and wastefully to the ground, beyond the reach of penitence and prayer to restore it. So the meal being lost, philanthropy had to fetch maize from over the Atlantic. The human being went out and the sheep came in. Meanwhile England was alarmed by the activity of the Chartists, who naturally availed themselves of the opportunities given to them by famine and want of work for organised agitation, culminating in the demonstration on April 10, 1848, some particulars as to this which came under my own observation I propose to give in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

LONDON IN THE SIXTIES

THE incidents narrated in the last chapter have led me on to anticipate events, for before settling in the Midlands, I had after my marriage spent some months off and on with my wife in London. We were there in the winter of 1847 and 1848. Those were the days of European revolutions and political troubles; in England these took the shape of the Chartist riots, with the demonstrations threatened against the Houses of Parliament and timed to come off on April 10.

The Government acted with great good sense and firmness, calling on civilians to enroll themselves as special constables and consulting the Duke of Wellington on military precautions. I was sworn in at Marlborough Street Police Court, and shared the Testament with a very black coal-heaver; his hand held one end of the book, mine the other. My cousin was also sworn in, and so was Louis Napoleon, with whom he was put on to patrol Conduit Street. My cousin was singularly like Louis, and as he spoke French fluently, they were a well-matched pair. I, with a greengrocer, patrolled the Hampstead Road near the Mother Redcap. Sir James Bathurst, an old Peninsular officer, was a friend and had a good house in town. The Duke had entrusted part of the operations to his hands, and as the demonstration was to come off on Monday, I called on Sir James on Sunday afternoon, and found him in the dining-

room with several officers round him and the table covered with maps. No doubt I was in the way, for he asked me if I would like to see what preparations were made against the morrow, and if so, did I know Belvedere Wharf, near the south end of Westminster Bridge. He seemed struck when I said, "Very well indeed"; for it so happened that this was the wharf and yard of a famous builder, Myers, who had built under Pugin's direction a country house for my mother. (He also built the King's Cross Station for the Great Northern Railway. He was Irish, and had begun life, I think, as a bricklayer's hodman. Pugin rightly put great trust in him, and he carried out a great amount of building for him, each understanding and trusting the other.) So I took a cab and went off to Westminster Bridge. I found the folding doors closing the entrance to the wharf shut, and had to kick them for some time before any notice was taken; at last a manager came and with great care partially opened one, which was still safeguarded by a chain. On my telling him who I was and that I came from Sir James Bathurst, he admitted me and at once barred the gates again. As soon as I was inside, I was struck with the clearance that had been made in the yard of builder's material and machinery. In their place there stood six pieces of artillery with the muzzles directed towards Westminster Bridge and concealed from outside view by some hoarding. On my asking Sir James when the military were to come into action, he replied that the Duke's orders were, "Not so long as a single special constable is alive and on his legs." However, there was no gunpowder burnt nor coffins for "specials"; the whole demonstration of the "masses" evaporated. The bayonets were then on the side of property and order.

There was at this time a great revival among Church-people, who had at length been brought to recognise the state of long-continued lethargy which had permitted the disgraceful neglect of things material as well as spiritual ; the days of churchwardens' whitewash were drawing to a close. The building of the new palace at Westminster was nearly completed. The art "boilers" at South Kensington, where King Cole reigned supreme, stirred the artistic taste, and as Free Trade had brought down the price of all building material, stone, timber, bricks, glass, and other trade goods, it was natural that such public buildings as our Churches should become objects of artistic interest. The elder Pugin and Gilbert Scott were in full vigour and were looked up to as safe guides in restorations and rebuildings. Minton was burning encaustic tiles of early patterns, and carpenters and carvers were taking lessons from Flemish work. Conservative feeling was controlling restorations, and much that would have been carted away or used for firewood in the past was now religiously preserved and kept in its place. This material progress, and study of the art of past centuries, were accompanied by a spiritual attraction toward old or obsolete ritual of a more ornate character adopted by the Puseyites, to whom the Church of England and the country are indebted for this vigorous renaissance. Their modest practices shocked and alarmed the slovenly Puritans and the Low Church and roused the temper of the people in the streets into denunciations of what they termed Popish practices.

Among my friends I then numbered the late Dr. Bryan King, Rector of St. George-in-the-East, whose conduct in that God-forsaken district was constantly the subject of newspaper paragraphs, and the criticism of a public

which knew very little of the real circumstances of the case. No doubt the rector's views were not understood by his people and did not harmonise with their religious ideas, where they had any; but what really fomented discord and led to disgraceful outbreaks was the old Puritan statutable establishment of a "preacher," elected by the parishioners to preach (and to preach only) at a given hour in the pulpit of the parish church. Naturally the dissentients elected a parson with views diametrically opposed to those of the High Church rector, who officiated in an empty church, while the preacher filled his pews with a plentiful congregation nursing their wrath to keep it warm under the stimulating eloquence of an orator of their own choosing. Things went from bad to worse, and there was some apprehension of personal violence being offered to the rector. I was asked on more than one occasion to attend his services as a representative of respectability and order, to which I acceded when it was possible for me to do so; but I always found the church quiet, indeed too quiet. It was a large church, with capacious galleries on either side, connected at the west end by the organ-loft, which faced the chancel. I cannot remember any screen to the chancel; there was a surpliced choir, which, with the exception of myself, solitary in a pew, constituted the whole of the congregation, unless, as on one occasion, a parrot that had escaped from Jamrach's was to count. There was a brilliant beadle too, but he was not devotional, and represented secular authority. A very wide cornice ran around the interior of the church high up above the windows at the back of the galleries. At the south-eastern extremity of this cornice next the chancel, and immediately above the pulpit, Pretty Poll had stationed

herself, and when the intoning commenced, she uttered most discordant responses and seemed determined to attract attention. In this she succeeded, for the beadle, carrying a rod about twelve feet long, was heard to go up the gallery stairs and proceed along the passage. The colouring of the bird and the beadle's uniform harmonised entirely, the former being evidently much impressed by the livery of the latter. Then a most amusing exhibition began. The beadle stretched up his rod and poked Poll's breast to set her in motion ; then he judiciously urged her by little pushes with the point towards the organ-loft. This required skill, judgment, and time, for Poll would only move in the "toe-over-toe" parrot fashion, a few inches at every touch. Any attempt to hasten her progress caused a discordant exclamation. I got rather uneasy, for the language of parrots picked up in Ratcliff Highway is not decent, and I was prepared any moment for a solemn request from the bird to the beadle to "go to hell." She held her tongue, however, and at last was coaxed and poked round the corner and behind the organ, where I fancied she might have to give in and be captured, after drawing her persecutor's blood. Not so, for in a few minutes Poll appeared again on a return trip, followed by the wand ; but when she had got half-way back towards the pulpit, the beadle, whose arms must have ached, gave in, and he beat a retreat, followed by a close examination of his discomfited person by Poll, with her head turned at an angle to bring one grey eye into full play on it. Then the service died out, and I left my pew for that day.

As years went on, Dr. King resigned his living for another in the country, but before he left, a licensed

chapel in the parish was consecrated as a church and a district allotted to it. The rector announced his intention of being present, and going in the procession to the building with the Bishop. Again a serious attack was feared, under the guidance of a quack, one Williams. Over forty policemen were requisitioned to meet the attack. I was again present, and admired the cool courage of the rector, who, walking apart from the police, in touch with the mob, made his way in manly and dignified style to the consecration. Meanwhile Williams, who was a German or spoke German, never turned up. His absence was accounted for by an early visit from a patient, ostensibly a German, who called on him for advice, being a sufferer from a complaint that the faculty could make nothing of. He sat in the patient's chair, showed his tongue, offered his pulse, gave a lengthy description of his illness and suffering, taking so much time over it that the doctor at last, looking at his watch, said he must leave to keep an appointment on business. "So," said the detective, "I have also an appointment to keep, but I need not leave the house unless you wish it, for I come from Scotland Yard, with orders not to lose sight of you all to-day."

As my family had been owners of property near the docks for over a hundred years, I was brought into touch with East London life and its interests. A new church was to be built—St. Peter's, in Old Gravel Lane, better known as St. Peter's, London Docks—and when a fund for this object was being raised, in spite of warnings at the prospect of extreme High Church and almost, if not quite, Romish practices, I thought there was plenty of room and work then for an extreme

ritualist, and I made a small contribution. Years afterwards, at the request of two clerical friends, I let them accompany me to a meeting of the Board of Guardians at the back of the church. Hearing an organ, they asked to be taken to the service, so, without my hat, I took them round into the gravel enclosure in which St. Peter's stood. Here we were met by a black-robed sacristan appearing at a side door, the handle to which he held in his hand, and told us that we could not enter, nor would he give us information as to the service going on inside. At last one of my companions said, "Is it a retreat?" upon which at once the reply came, "You can go in," and opening the door, he gave them admission and at once pulled it to. I was a stranger to him, but I ventured to tell him that I had contributed £6 to the building fund, which I thought would just about pay for the door he had shut in my face. It appeared that an intercessory service for Macconochie was in progress within.

I was constantly asked by friends and acquaintances to be allowed to accompany me to see some of the supposed horrors and iniquities of the district. To this I seldom assented. On one occasion, however, a very smart member of the House of Lords, an early and zealous supporter of the Charity Organisation Society (Lord Lichfield), made the request, and as I was going there the next day, I said he might come with me by all means if the time suited him, and I decided to pay a visit to Mr. Jackson, the lay missionary, in Wellclose Square. He was at home, opened the door himself, and invited us into a room with a sanded floor, bare walls, two or three Windsor chairs, and a deal table with a Bible on it. I introduced my friend. The only occupant of the room was a young

fellow poorly dressed, with unattractive features, seated bolt upright in one of the chairs against the wall. Without any preliminaries, Jackson, going up to my lord, said civilly in a persuasive voice, "I am certain your lordship will not object to pray for Henry," and at once went on his knees; I did the same; the noble lord, without hesitation, followed our example, but not before he had spread his white pocket-handkerchief on the sandy floor to kneel on. It was a November afternoon, and a small gas-burner hanging from the centre of the low ceiling dimly lighted a curious scene: a peer of the realm, a St. George's East land- and house-owner, a sailors' lay missionary, and a professional thief all on their knees together with their faces over the table. Jackson's intercessions were very homely, but hearty, and entirely devoid of "rant." A few days afterwards I called to ask him about Henry. "Oh!" he said, "our prayers were heard, for I was able to send him to sea the next morning with a pious captain."

I had many talks with Lord Lichfield, and among his experiences one is quite worth recording. He told me that one morning as he was sitting alone in the dining-room after breakfast, a ring came at the front door, whereupon the footman came in to say that there was a lady at the door who wished to see her ladyship upon a matter of some assistance. He was desired to say that her ladyship was unwell and not down, but that his master was better able to hear what the lady had to say, and he directed her to be shown into the dining-room. Here, when she was seated, Lord Lichfield told her that he made a point of himself going thoroughly into the facts whenever an application for assistance in distress was made to his wife or him, and that if she did not object

she might make him acquainted with them without reservation or colouring. The lady at once assented. She was extremely well (quietly though expensively) dressed, and told her story in a very clear and connected way. She had been governess to Grisi's children, and had, of course, accompanied her on the Continent. At Vienna and again at St. Petersburg she had made a disreputable acquaintance with two men of good birth. She was, in fact, a woman with a history. At last she parted from Grisi, and had the world before her in which to seek her living. Lord Lichfield observed that she must be a gifted musician to have filled the place she did in Grisi's establishment. "Yes," she said, "of course I am, and for a little time I tried giving lessons; but I felt above it, and it was too dull for me. So I took to begging: it paid better, but the income was uncertain. Five clergymen have taken my case up, and advocated it in fashionable circles. They got a fair lot of money together, but it was uncertain. One year they brought me in over £700, sometimes £500, sometimes only £300. There was no certainty, and at the best it never seemed enough. I had to have occasional interviews, too, with my patronesses, and they annoyed me with serious advice and the gift of tracts, from which I derived no ease or comfort." "Well," asked Lord Lichfield, "after all this experience, what do you think of the five clergymen?" Upon which the lady jumped out of her chair, and stepped angrily up to Lord Lichfield. Throwing up her veil, she thrust her passionate face into his, and exclaimed, "My lord, I hate them like hell!" Then she seated herself again, and his lordship asked her, "Why so?" "Because," she said, "there was no certainty. I felt, too, I was

part of an exhibition and the best was not being done with me. If, instead of these wretched, unsatisfying hundreds, they had got me a round sum of, say, £2,000, I might have left the country with this capital, married, and found a home for life." A true instance of the inefficacy of philanthropic dribblets, even when the dribblets, as in this case, are substantial.

Another case of philanthropic bounty that came under my notice is worth mentioning, though the object here was in a position very different from that of Grisi's governess. A wretched jade in Trafalgar Square begged of a young, well-dressed gentleman. He was fortunately one of the right sort, and promptly told her she was begging of quite the wrong person for her purpose, as he never helped unless he was well acquainted with the life and circumstances of the applicant, and she had better go away at once, or she might get into trouble. The woman, however, persisted, almost on her knees, and played her part well, insisting that if he only would inquire into her sad case, she felt sure he would pity her. He began to yield, but keeping his rule in view, asked her where she lived. She told him at Islington, and that her husband was lying dead there on their only bed, with her two children starving by his side. Giving way further, he inquired the street, and calling a cab, told the drab to get in and the driver to go to the address she named. In time they arrived at a miserable passage, up which they went after dismissing the cab; he was taken upstairs to a filthy room with no fire, in which were two half-clothed, half-naked children, with eyes preternaturally large from starvation, and with their little limbs of about the substance of tobacco-pipes. There was something on the bed under a sheet,

the sheet lifted at the bottom by the two stiff feet, and the head covered over at the other end on a pillow. He put his hand under, and found it cold; the woman meanwhile stood by with an air of anxiety and expectation. He took out a sovereign, gave it to her, and, after pointing out the cruelty of not having applied to the parish officers for food and maintenance, told her the gift would buy food for the present and a coffin, and to lose no time in getting both in at once. As he walked away after leaving the passage, he fell in with a policeman, whom he addressed, and said he would gladly give him a trifle if he would undertake to see the relieving officer, and call his attention to a terrible case of distress in a passage not far off. The constable took out his note-book and pencil, and began to take down the particulars, but stopping short and putting his pencil back, said, "Oh! I know that case perfectly well. I fancy the woman bought the body yesterday, and I know she hires the children as a show; but she takes care not to beg on my beat." Now, had not the donor fallen in with the constable, he would have returned unconscious of having been duped. The moral is, he should have done his duty in Trafalgar Square, and given the woman into custody for begging, instead of journeying to Islington to be tricked, consulting the constable only when it was too late.

For a winter I was in London near the Zoological Gardens, where my wife and I were frequent visitors, both being lovers of birds and beasts, particularly of the squirrel tribe, of which at home we kept several favourites. Of these, English or foreign, none were more engaging than the little flying squirrel. They slept all day in a chip box containing the best bonnet, a thing of joy and beauty

from Mrs. Brown in Bond Street. It had been an effort to acquire and pay for it, but there it was, a charming acquisition lying by on a high shelf waiting for a bright and calm day to reveal its attractions. When the reading-lamp came, we watched the light lid of the box begin to quiver, and then, yielding to the pressure from within, open slightly to allow a charming little soft head with the eyes of Juno to appear. After a moment's survey, two tiny feet clutched the edge of the box, and then the little glossy body was propelled forward and came fluttering on its membranes down through the air on to one of our shoulders. Two companions followed, and the little group began their games. At last the bright day came, a Sunday. The maid was desired to bring down the bonnet-box, and to have a work-basket ready for the removal of the sleeping beauties. I was present, and I never shall forget her horrified exclamation of "Oh my!" when the lid was taken off. There was no bonnet, but on one side was an artistic heap of coloured fragments, with a circular hole in it forming the squirrels' dormitory. They were not disturbed, but replaced as before on the high shelf, for my wife said it did not matter, as it had made them happy.

We bought three call-ducks of Bailey, in Mount Street—"Old Bailey," as we called him, for there was a son who succeeded to that admirable business. Somehow or another, they escaped from their basket, and they were soon up in the air having a look round, as ducks do. We were much distressed, as night was coming on and the street lamps were alight. We held a council, ourselves and the two Baileys, who suggested the Zoological Gardens. The next morning I was there in good

time, and, to my delight, could distinguish the loquacity of the call-birds, rising above the menagerie noises. I found them in the water, with quite a little court of wild-fowl about them. The newcomers were evidently considered to be excellent lively company. There was no difficulty in retaking them, and from Euston Station they were sent off at once to the country.

There was greater difficulty over another recovery. We had, among other dogs, a most lovely Skye terrier, rough, of a drab colour, with two black eyes like pickled walnuts under his shaggy eyebrows. A friend's servant, contrary to orders, took him for a walk with the children, and, of course, such a gem was gone in no time. She came back to tell her master that Dick had strayed. He told her, while dogs in the country strayed, in London they were stolen. He came to me, almost with tears in his eyes, to announce the dreadful news, and declared his resolution of devoting his life to Dick's recovery. He was a friend of the Chief Commissioner of Police in Scotland Yard, while I was intimate with "The Bishop of Bond Street," Westley-Richards' manager, whose animosity to dog-stealers and activity in promoting legislation for their discomfiture were well known. I think he knew as much or more about the fraternity than was known in Scotland Yard. Anyhow, in time tidings came of Dicky, in the fortuitous possession of a nameless gentleman in Shoreditch. A high price was named for his ransom, so high as to cause remonstrance. A go-between then appeared on the scene, who insisted that Dicky could not be "got back honest" for less than £5 to be paid to his custodian, the transfer to be effected in a certain low public-house in an equally low street in the most disreputable part of Shoreditch. A further condition was that my cousin,

who was a distinguished-looking man, but full of engagements, should make a preliminary visit for the purpose of introduction to the gentlemen, mostly dog-stealers, who frequented the bar. This he did, without his watch or ornaments, when he was pledged to secrecy, and to a stipulation to wash his hands of Scotland Yard and to call again in three days' time. Having treated the company to drinks of their own selection, and been nearly suffocated with tobacco, he found his way home as best he could. He kept his appointment in the evening of the third day and met the same boon companions, but no Dicky ; he was asserted to be not in town, but with many oaths and solemn asseverations it was promised that on that day week he should be "come at honest," and would come up from the country and be handed over in exchange for five sovs. Again my friend kept his appointment, and the proceedings began with several drinks all round, and some songs. Then the door being partly opened, Dicky slipped into the room, and was met with the interesting inquiry, "Why, who the devil does this dawg belong to? Who owns this dawg?" As no one claimed him, it was agreed that any one of the company who chose to place five sovs. on the table and pay the score, should be at liberty to collar the dawg and be off with him. In two hours he was in his old home, "honest," and was undergoing the process of washing, or rather scrubbing.

CHAPTER VIII

FARMING IN THE MIDLANDS

THE spring of 1848 came on with its usual severity, and we left London for Hazelbeech, our future home in the Midlands, halfway between Northampton and Market Harborough, driving all the way in a pony-carriage, and sleeping at Dunstable. The glory of the famous posting-inn The Sugar Loaf was gone. No smart coaches or posters pulled up at its hospitable door ; the long range of stables down the yard had not a horse in them, and grass grew between the pebbles of the pavement. How different from the life and bustle upon which, as a schoolboy, I looked down from the smart coach-top ! These days seemed then very distant, almost farther off than they do now, when memory skips whole chapters of monotonous life's history and pauses and calls up only striking events, sad, serious, or joyful. Though we were lodged at the best hostelry in the town, it was but a mere pot-house with a noisy bar and a landlady in carpet slippers. There was a parlour with no fire, and a difficulty in kindling one, a chimney with a bird's nest in it that had to be burnt out, and from which at every gust the black smoke rolled out with almost explosive force. In these inhospitable circumstances we felt like castaways, and gave way to dull despair. As early as possible we went on our way. The roads were heavy, being mended in those days, as I have said before, with local material—sometimes sand, sometimes gravel or flint or rotting



ALBERT PELL AT HAZELBEECH

pebbles, contributed by the farmers, and picked off the arable fields by the frozen fingers of rural infants. These materials having been shot in heaps by the wayside under the direction of the parish surveyor of the highway, the other extreme of human life, kneeling, cracked the largest specimens with repeated feeble blows of a clumsy hammer. Here and there this work was varied after a frost by the old fellows scraping off as mud the metal they had put on a month or two earlier. For all this miserable outfit statutable books had to be kept, made up, and verified, a separate rate got out, solemnly allowed by justices of the peace, and then collected. The whole business ended with a wrangle at the vestry, for which the surveyor fortified himself with a brimming jorum of brandy and water.

I was soon settled in the Midlands, taking a farm dreadfully out of order, foul, wet, and exhausted. A steam plough was just designed at Reading, so I squared the fields up into parallelograms ready for its use if anything should come of it. I took a twenty-one years' lease of the land, 300 acres, and at once proceeded to make bricks and drain-pipes. The clay was excellent, labour was cheap and good of its kind, and the new farm premises were soon up. When winter came, I began to put the pipes in the ground. Any number of men were at my disposal, though the parish and those immediately adjacent were "close" parishes, and the men had to walk in some cases three and four miles to their work. Sometimes I had as many as thirty applicants for work in a day, some in the house yard, others in the shelter of the sheds. I could put most of them on, and I had at one time as many as sixty in my employment.

Fuel in old days was dear, and in a village near at

hand, the people, before the enclosure, used to bring home the cowdung from the open ways, and dab it against the whitewashed walls of their homes, from which, after being sun-baked, it was gathered under the name of "wall-fruit" for fuel. In an unenclosed parish there was, as a rule, no hedge-wood, or hedge-timber, excepting in the few old enclosures round the manor-house and rectory. A very few feet separated the squatters' well from the pigsty and cess-pools; and frequently one shallow dip-well and spring would be the water-supply for a score of houses. Typhoid made fearful ravages, and the water was the great source of infection. In one open parish, with a narrow, crowded by-street, I prevailed on the local doctor to make a plan of the houses which lined it and to sketch a coffin into each house in which he knew death to have occurred from this fever. Up and down this inclined thoroughfare were several little troughs, each fed by its own spring, but all connected below in the porous ground with the drains and cess-pools. Every attempt to improve this condition of things was resolutely resisted with reiterated statements that no fever had ever been prevalent with fatal consequences. At last, with the passing of the Public Health Act, 1875, efficient sewers were laid and fever has totally disappeared.

At thirty years of age I had entirely identified myself with the pursuits and interests of country life in the Midlands, varied with the duties and responsibilities belonging to the ownership of ancestral property in the swarming population of East London. Without the faintest expectation of ever being in Parliament, during the next seventeen years I came to fill every parish office. My neighbours put me to be churchwarden,

overseer of the poor, surveyor of the highways, guardian of the poor. Outside this I was a justice of the peace, and at one time I was so frequently summoned to serve on special juries that I at last appealed with success at the Assizes to be exempted from this exceptional call on my time.

As a regular attendant at the markets in the transaction of business with farmers and dealers, and being myself a tenant of three farms, I thoroughly understood, without the aid of books, pamphlets, or newspapers, the grievances, real and fancied, of those whose living depended on husbandry and live-stock. But I read as well.

I pursued Liebig from Edinburgh to Glasgow, at the cost of a wealthy cousin, in a carriage with special engine, to hear him address 300 Scotch schoolmasters at a public dinner, with Alison the historian in the chair. Alison proposed Liebig's health in a fine speech. Then came the grievous disappointment: the great chemist made his acknowledgment in German, of which I knew not a word, though Arnold had put it on the Rugby curriculum the year before I left Rugby. Great as Liebig was, his opinion on the value of mineral manures, as the only fertilisers needed, was entirely wrong, and was proved to be so in a few years by my friend Sir John Lawes.

I took great interest in the condition of the parish roads. I—who, as a boy, had experienced on the fast coaches the advantages of Telford's magnificent Holyhead Road, coated with finely broken, hard material, with the constant attention of well-paid, experienced roadmen—could not bring myself to tolerate the slovenly methods of my predecessors in office, besides the waste of money in using the rotten local stone, or pebbles picked off the fields. I at once ordered up a canal-boat

cargo of properly broken so-called granite, to use as far as it would go. This meant a bigger highway-rate for the time, so I was voted out of office, and my successor, finding my material not worn out, bought less metal than ever, and was applauded for his skilful economy, and re-appointed. The next year the granite was cut through, and patching with rotten stone begun, and we relapsed into ruts and mud, and that was our condition until highway boards for districts superseded the parish officer.

The church was in a dangerous condition. The north arcade was in danger of coming down, owing to a county family using that aisle for burial, digging holes for its squires close to the columns, and burrowing through the east wall for access to a brick pit outside. The windows to the south aisle were partly filled in with brickwork. Some of the clerestory windows were in the same plight. One had the tracery hacked out, and a wooden house-window put in its place.

A builder's estimate stated that £300 would be wanted to make the structure safe. The rector, a prim, dignified little gentleman, keeping his close carriage and pair, was appalled at this suggested outlay, declaring that to raise such a sum was an impossibility. However, we made the venture, and what with fear of the roof coming down on their heads and a revived interest in Church work, then very strong in the diocese, we had sufficient promises, without going far afield, to justify our calling in an architect to prepare plans and specifications. Then we had a check. The principal contributor and landowner turned out to have peculiar ideas about parishioners' rights in their church, and could not be brought to perceive that a parish church

ought not to be converted into a private chapel without remonstrance. A withdrawal of his promised subscription followed on this remonstrance being made. It need hardly be said that the dissentient and defaulter was a Whig. The neighbourhood, however, specially one Dissenter, understood the principle for which we were now contending, public against private interest, and the whole of the lost subscription was replaced and exceeded by many smaller sums, and the work was put in hand. Instead of £300 being a difficulty, £1,345 was paid in for the work. There was, however, a very unlooked-for objection raised by our rector, who, with his family, had most liberally helped the building fund. It is hardly credible, but there were some extremely handsome old oak seats in the nave, and a most picturesque old porch, both scarred and beautified by age, and his heart's desire was to do away with both, and replace them by something "less dilapidated, and neater." But though much distressed, he gave in at last under pressure, and the old seats remain in their places. Behind them, of the same solidity and with the same carved decorations, are the new ones, in the place of the old box pews. The shattered roof was removed, and a heavy, solid oak duplicate, with the same design and mouldings, spanned the nave, flanked in the same way by new work to the aisles, and over all came the new lead covering. With the old structures went the village orchestra—a bass viol, a flute, a flageolet, and a fiddle, also Tate and Brady. Organs were the rage, and somebody gave us a very poor one. Then came in "Hymns, Ancient and Modern," and one of the old features of village Sunday life disappeared for ever. A mechanical thing with a handle supplanted our zealous orchestra,

and the Church, by this change, lost the regular presence at its services of four appointed musicians, unflinching witnesses to the supremacy of the Established Church of England. Village life lost much by these reforms, which disestablished its "minor canons" and removed a palpable encouragement to, and reason for, teaching music in the village school.

Shortly before I came into my Midland home, the rector, the same who disliked the old oak seats, pulled down the old Norman chancel and replaced it by a neat, barn-like building, with Bangor slating and iron spouting. This abomination, however, has been cleared away by another rector, and an extremely fine chancel placed on the old foundations. This sort of good work has been, in my lifetime, going on all over the country. In my little parish, with only 130 to 140 inhabitants, over £2,000 has been laid out in restoration and adornment of the church, mostly in masonry, carpentry in oak, and in carving, and this without any general appeal for funds, but carried out by those having a personal interest in the place.

Free trade and war prices for grain led to the ploughing up of much of the poorer pastures, and, when the duty was taken off building material, to the erection of shedding-barns and new farmhouses in all directions. Land Improvement Acts and Companies promoted borrowing and charges on landed property, and owners got themselves gaily into debt. At first the tenants were pledged to pay the interest as an addition to their rents, and with abundant yield from the newly broken pastures and war prices, all went well; but with the permanent fall in prices, the debt for improvement, and the substitution of the superior tenant with his two or three

sitting-rooms for the old-fashioned plain master of his business, a great crash came, and, in the end, affairs were brought to an equilibrium, with a loss of 30 to 50 per cent. of rent to the landowners. There had been a pretentious disregard of natural agencies, and a hurry to anticipate them by artificial substitutes. Crushing rollers at great expense were to do imperfectly what frost or the sun's baking heat and showers would do perfectly. Spiked Norwegian harrows were to assist in pulverising. The patent "cultivator" or scuffle was to do much of the work of the plough, and many husbandmen were thus scuffled into insolvency. The successful inventor and advertiser of a razor strop*—honest, excellent enthusiast, with the literary assistance of an eulogistic press, brought a smiling host of the new school to his hospitable table on a heath, and showed them how to obviate drought, and fertilise their field by underground hydrants, conveying manure in the liquid form.

My wealthy cousin who had run me in his "special" from Edinburgh to Glasgow to listen to Liebig, became the prey of an impostor, who convinced him that by far the larger part of agricultural processes could be dispensed with by resorting to the astounding influence of electricity. This charlatan, hailing from the far north, with thistles in flower embroidered on his brogues, moved about in society with his two hands thrust in his pockets. Pulling out his left, he showed a palm full of very inferior barley; that, he said, was the average produce of benighted farmers. Putting that back, the right hand came up with a specimen of the finest grain, bold and golden; he called it "bonnie," and said its character and quality were due to electricity.

* Mr. Mechi, see p. 298.

The means of this achievement were simple, and my cousin arranged for a demonstration on his estate in Hertfordshire, to take place early in the year, so that we might reap the advantage of mastering the method in that season's crop on our own farms. On a very cold bright day the party, about a score, came on the scene of action in a flinty field near Tring railway-station. There we found a plot of about a rood, with a few poles erected on its margin ; over the tops of these, wires were trained, coming down like shrouds or stays to stakes in the ground, to which they were fastened. That was all there was of reality ; not much, but it was more than made up for in the most daring assertion of mysterious efficacy, corroborated by the pocket samples. The plot had been sown with barley, within sight of the passing railway-carriages, and if further proof was required by the sceptical, they would only have to look out of the windows in passing and they would get it. We wound up this mystic day with an excellent dinner as my cousin's guests at an hotel at Tring. As the chill of the flinty field wore off and our spirits awoke from the blank despondency caused by the sight and memory of the wire framing, we became contentious. There had been some mutterings of Science with the soup ; they died out with its removal, and with the joint came signs of distrust. My cousin and the charlatan, with the aid of two spirit-rappers, maintained their position, relying on Science, and pointing out that its absence in our education and in the conduct of our business lay at the bottom of our disbelief, but that henceforth we had only ourselves to blame if our garners were not better furnished with grain. The disquisition was brought to an abrupt end by an old fellow in drab, who

had been silent throughout, exclaiming from the bottom of the table that he "could not swallow it." At first we were apprehensive, from his excited manner, that this referred to a portion of double Gloucester sticking in his throat, but he dismissed that cause of alarm by a thump on the table and the solemn proclamation that "them wires was a plant," he might go as far as to say, with all respect, "damned humbug." This led to some husky exclamations of "Order! order!" "Chair! chair!" which brought my cousin on his legs to request the charlatan at once to remove their doubts and refute the heretics by an exhibition on the spot of the two convincing samples. The charlatan, having rung for the waiter, desired to be furnished with two saucers and a "dram of Loch-na-Gar." These were brought, and tossing off the Loch-na-Gar, he dived into his two pockets with the intention of placing the two samples in their respective saucers for our better inspection and conviction. It turned out, however, that in consequence of previous drams they had got mixed, and that neither pocket held a pure illustration, both instead being filled with a hybrid. To make up for the disappointment, he gave us appropriately "Willie brewed a peck o' maut," declined argument, took snuff violently, and became sulky.

Wonders, however, did not come to an end at Tring; France, superseding Scotland, was to furnish more. A friend in Berkshire invited me to stay a few days with him and (the old story) learn how to fill the stackyard without the expensive manure-cart. This was to be done by a French process, consisting in steeping the grain before sowing in a miraculous fluid fertiliser, to be procured at an appreciable cost from the Gallic discoverer. Upon

the faith of some foreign literature and newspaper disquisitions, my friend had gone and entangled himself in the net, steeped all his seed corn, and was awaiting the result in the utmost confidence and with a beaming countenance. In the end he did not seem a bit disconcerted or ashamed when his crops turned out to be quite the worst in the county.

Apart from these gross impostors was another class, honest in their belief, enthusiastic, rhetorical, and confident—new lights, disdainful of experience, with a smattering of Science, creatures of the laboratory, not submissive to Nature and her persistent teaching, arrogant in their disdain and disregard of experience as a guiding star, now paled by the effulgence of experiment. They were excellent and interesting companions and had their representatives in Parliament. Among them was one I knew, a clergyman of great rural fame. I used to meet him in country houses, where, after dinner, he was fond of telling us, as he filled his glass with claret, that soil was a matter of indifference to him, as it soon would be to all modern cultivators; he could grow his turnips as well on a deal board as in a melon bed. The modicums of organic and inorganic requisites for plant life and development had been ascertained with precision and could be furnished by the chemist. When asked how he would get on for moisture, the reply came at once, "Well enough! A salted spot in the English climate is always damp." So salt stood for rain. These Jack o' Lanthorns, however, after drawing their deluded followers into the accustomed pitfalls, flickered out in due course, while advance on sounder ways was made by more cautious and better trained adventurers. This discovery of phosphatic nodules

(coprolites) in Cambridgeshire and their treatment with sulphuric acid provided an abundant supply of soluble phosphates for turnip growers, and some compensation for the exhaustion of Peruvian guano. At this point there stepped out of the ranks of English squires a really great agricultural instructor and benefactor, Mr. (afterwards Sir) John Bennet Lawes. Early in life he had studied chemistry with the best masters, and had learnt all that science could tell to the student of plant and animal life. Being eminently practical as well as theoretical, he took in hand the preparation of superphosphate of lime on a large commercial scale, with great advantage to himself and to husbandry. I was now a life-member of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, and so often met Mr. Lawes, at last making his acquaintance. He had founded the experimental farm at his family place at Rothamsted, and there, in the beautiful old mansion, he was ever ready to give his friends a hearty welcome. His method of investigation was so thorough as to command the acceptance of all his deductions. When he found science and scientific conclusions at variance with the accepted and successful practice of the farmer, there was with him no scornful rejection of the field lessons, but, on the contrary, the formulas and work of the laboratory were reconsidered and scrutinised in the modest belief that the field might be right and the study in error, as was frequently found to be the case. His was a rugged wisdom ; no long hair or fanciful apparel suggested the intense mental activity and reflection present in that small, active, untiring body. The clear way in which he imparted scientific truths to an unscientific companion was beyond praise, and so were the

generosity and energy with which he would for hours pour out valuable knowledge to a receptive mind. Sometimes this was quite startling. I remember some conversation we had one day about wheat and the belief that it was not to be found wild anywhere in the world. I remarked that of course this must be the case, as bread comes of the sweat of a man's brow, and on that account, together with the curse and the thorns and briars, I thought the miraculous seed-corn of wheat must have been put into Adam's hands when he first went forth to till the earth. He said, "I can show you some proof of that," and going to a wide cabinet of shallow drawers, he produced from the top a splendid sample, bundled up, of wheat in the straw. In the drawer below was a bundle of what, in America, goes by the name of a volunteer crop—that is, the self-sown crop from the seed of the previous year's plant, shed on the ground. The ears of this specimen were very inferior indeed to those of the parent plant. But again, in the drawer lower down, was another bundle of the self-sown third year's harvest, self-grown, untouched and unassisted by human labour. In this sample there was not a single grain present to carry on the race. The straw was there, short and weak, and at the top the grain-bearing spikes entirely unfruitful.

Lawes was a deer-stalker and accomplished salmon-fisher. He rented for many years in Scotland some water giving him good sport, but never with large fish. I think he told me their weight did not exceed seven pounds. At last, upon application for the renewal of the lease, the owner expressed his great regret that, in consequence of his heir having come to man's estate, the water would no longer be let. So the last day for Lawes's rod on the river dawned, and he made

the most of it, with the very extraordinary result of landing three fish of unprecedented weight, one, I think he told me, nine pounds, one over eleven, and one actually twenty-one. He could only account for this, he said, as a complimentary effort on the part of the fish to signalise his retirement by a generous example of self-sacrifice.

His life and splendid genius were devoted to agricultural research and, with the aid of his accomplished colleague Sir Henry Gilbert, to the collection, during a long series of years, of records and tables of the results obtained in the laboratory and farm at Rothamsted, but, in the end, he realised that the secrets of Nature required far more time than the life of one man for their sufficient and trustworthy revelation. Whereupon, with rare unselfishness and the deepest faith in his views, he placed £100,000 in the hands of trustees, to be devoted to the systematic continuance of the Rothamsted investigations. While he was still living it was thought well, on the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the laboratory at Rothamsted, to place some enduring memorial of the event on the spot. Accordingly, a huge block of granite was brought from the north, and placed on the common just outside the grounds, with an inscription of the purpose it was intended to serve. Invitations to persons likely to be interested were issued, among others to me. Two dukes—one the President of the Royal Agricultural Society, the other, a past President—attended, as well as the Lord Lieutenant of the County, and this trio were the only representatives of the agricultural capital of England. I was horribly dissatisfied at this neglect, especially when I found Scotland, France, Germany, and other countries sending eager representatives, some

of whom begged of me to obtain permission to view the experimental plots before leaving. Sir Henry Gilbert not only acquiesced, but accompanied the visitors, who pushed their inquiries with the ardour of men who knew the value of this opportunity.

CHAPTER IX

HOLIDAY RAMBLES

NEARLY every year my wife and I, with very little money to spare, made excursion either in the west or north of England, for the most part on foot. Thus I visited and revisited the coast line of North Devon, Somerset, and Cornwall, every now and then leaving the route for some fair or notable farm or estate. On one occasion, taking my knapsack, I walked from Lynmouth to Mr. Knight's improvements at Simonds Bath, Exmoor, where a great sale of Exmoor ponies was held. I found much of the moor there enclosed and under cultivation with improved grasses, such as rye grass. On the moor itself cattle were taken in to joist, and the sums realised seemed to have been steadily rising; beginning at £400 a year, they had gone up to £500, £1,000, and at last to £1,400. Ewes bought at 16s. produced lambs which went off at 27s. I bought no ponies at this sale; but hearing of a fair next day at Barnstaple, I walked on all night, and was on the spot in time to buy some young horses and a small drove of young Devon cattle. I can never forget the rage and fury of a huge, rough cattle-dealer at my appearing as a strange buyer from a distance. His behaviour was very objectionable, not to say insulting; but if it annoyed me, it amused the farmers, who were naturally delighted to find a new buyer at the fair, and all anxious to draw me away by a button-hole to see "the very best bunch of moor cattle ever seen in the

county." I had no trouble in doing business on fair and satisfactory terms, and, when all was over and several glasses of abominable mixtures had been swallowed for good fellowship, they brought me a trustworthy drover who undertook, for the sum of half a guinea each, to get my purchases to my Midland farm. This he did without any mishap, though he did not pick up any animals by mistake on the way, as the best Scotch drovers sometimes do. A friend of mine, going from England to the West Highlands to hold land there, was cautioned about the drovers and shepherds who were to take his stock to Falkirk Tryst. When the owner was English, it was not unusual for several of his animals to disappear on the way, and he would be told, that what with freebooting tricks and the thousands of sheep and cattle on foot together, the loss of animals was quite a natural feature in the drift. My friend, however, was assured that an extremely experienced and wily drover, one in a thousand, had been retained for him. The animals were counted into his charge, and started off a fortnight before the tryst. Their owner followed and joined his property at Falkirk. With much apprehension and misgiving, he inquired of the drover, after they had both "tasted," how he got through. He replied, "None so bad, though it might have been better; there are only thirteen *more* animals in the drove than when I started."

Many amusing surprises were encountered at fairs and markets. One of the earliest I can call to mind was at Southall, in Middlesex. It was a great, almost metropolitan, market for calves and pigs. The owner of four very nice animals in a pen was directing my attention to their charms, when a buyer came forward

rather boldly and said, "How much a head?" "Thirty shillings," my companion replied in an engaging and respectful tone. I at once regretted my not having gone in myself for such a bargain, as the price named was certainly much below the value. The buyer knew this as well, but he kept his countenance and began haggling and asking how much would be abated. But as the seller remained taciturn, he said with the usual air of desperation, "Well, I'll take them," and brought out a five-pound note and one sovereign, which he put into the vendor's hand, who at once quietly observed, "This won't do." "Why so?" said the butcher. "You can't back out." "Oh no! I don't want to do that; but I want six pounds more of you," was the reply. This brought out violent remonstrance and the assertion, "When I asked how much a head, you said, and no mistake, thirty shillings." "Just so," retorted the seller; "but I want thirty shillings more for their tails." Then came: "Well now, I never! What business have you to take up folks' time with this nonsense?" Then, after five minutes' amusing badinage, another five-pound note was added and the bargain was closed.

In horse-dealing not a point is overlooked, caution is pitted against deception all the way round. Warranty comes in question, and "chaunting" has to be tested. The art of concealing defects and extolling and demonstrating excellency comes into full play; but only half of this caution is thought needful in the purchase of a cow. I once, however, saw an instance of a bad bargain from this conventional indifference. There was a remarkably useful-looking cow standing by herself in the sun against the wall of Leicester market. As I thought it might suit me, I questioned a man standing by, and

was told she had belonged to a farmer, but was just sold to a dealer. I kept my eye on the animal, and had the luck to see the dealer come to drive her away, so I waited to get a word with him. He seemed in a hurry, and tapping the animal on the hocks with his ash-plant to put her in motion, he startled her out of a reverie ; but instead of turning round and walking off, she went head-long with a crash against the wall opposite. The dealer, taken aback all on the sudden, drew himself up for a moment, and then turning to me said, " I am blowed if she isn't blind ! " And so she was, as a stone.

In 1854 came the war with Russia. The Protectionists taunted the Free Traders with their unrealised anticipations of universal peace and goodwill among nations. Wheat rose promptly 8s. a quarter. War was declared on March 28, and we had a day of public humiliation on April 26, when I went twice to the village church. During this year my interest in the Poor Law was revived by Mr. Baines's Bill in Parliament on the settlement of the poor, and I examined more closely the action of the guardians in my own and other unions, not omitting East London. For a year or two war with Russia continued. Alma, the false report of the fall of Sebastopol, Balaclava, Inkerman, all followed in quick succession, till the end came and the Russians evacuated, or, rather, were driven out of the battered stronghold, which had been made so formidable by the genius of Todleben. On May 29 came the peace rejoicings, and I witnessed the fireworks on Primrose Hill from my station in the Regent's Park.

Every autumn I now went shooting, fishing, and deer-stalking in Scotland, or shooting in Ireland. The scenery furnished the principal charm, especially in deer-stalking ;

all was then so quiet, no rambling dogs, no talking, all movements so stealthy that we almost trod on the unsuspecting and undisturbed quarry as they "met secure" in the sacred forest. My rifle differed much from the modern form, but it was a famous one, and had been the property of the most notable sportsman of his day, Major Ross. It came from Vienna, a double barrel, carried a ball of an ounce weight which, wrapped in a greased patch, was rammed with some exertion down to the powder, which had been previously measured out in a small horn cup, like a thimble. The right barrel was dead true, the left shot slightly across the right. The first stalker that took me afield was George Ross; when we first foregathered, he startled me by a loud Scotch exclamation, and, snatching the rifle from my hand, he held it up before him in an attitude of adoration. Many a time had he carried it in the forest with the Major, and he seemed to have for it the affection of a parent. On my telling him I had never used it, in fact, had never been out after stags, he said it would be well if I tried the sighting. So off we went. When I pulled the horn measure out of my waistcoat pocket, he was in raptures, declaring that now nothing was wanting except my good behaviour. We put up an orange on a rod, stepped out sixty yards, that being the longest range he would allow. At the first shot the orange was dispersed in a squash. Then I was to try the left barrel. Ross knew of its deflection, and told me the allowance to make for it; but I missed the mark, and it was not until I had had three tries that I satisfactorily mastered the error.

The next morning we started together, he leading Boston, a very fine heavy black retriever. It was a lovely, still, sunny day. I had a very good glass by

Dolland, and begged to be allowed to try my hand, or rather eyes, at finding the game. Within an hour or so we sat down, as he said there was a beast, a good one, within view. It must have been a quarter of an hour or more before I discovered him about two miles off, feeding. Then we got up, and at once I became a mere child in the stalker's hands. Sometimes we walked upright, sometimes stooping, sometimes crawling like reptiles, ever and anon testing the almost imperceptible currents in the air by tossing up little scraps of dead grass, or wetting the forefinger and holding it up. Of course we kept the beast under observation, and at one time feared he had moved off, but, persevering, found he was lying down partly hid by a stone ; so on we moved, and it soon came to crawling only, or getting over the ground in a sort of swimming style stretched along horizontally. At last Ross, putting his hand under my chin to raise my head a bit, whispered, " Look ! " I was so hot and my eyes so clouded by motes that it was some seconds before I could see distinctly, but I pinched Ross's hand to let him know I spotted the stag, or at least so much of him as consisted of his magnificent head, neck, and one shoulder, for he was still lying at rest. Ross slipped the rifle into my hand, and I put the muzzle just over a stone to which we had crept ; then he whispered, " Fifty yards—be steady " ; but before I fired, and when all my mental power seemed to have centred in my right eye and forefinger, I felt his hand and arm sliding up inside my jacket along my backbone. It was rather distracting, but I kept steady, and the report of the shot broke the awful stillness of the hills and echoed away among the rocks. The smoke curled up in the autumn air, I was on my feet in no time, so was the stag,

who made off down the slopes for a little corrie. He was out of sight before we reached the spot where he had lain. Ross was in good spirits, saying I had hit him in the right place. Releasing Boston, we followed him on the track, and were soon brought to a splash of blood on a rock, then to another and another, and so into the corrie, where the splendid beast was stretched out dead. We made the venison safe in concealment, and went on to the bothie for the night, catching some unsophisticated trout in a loch with a rowan berry. Rain came on, and I was drenched before getting under cover. In the hut we contrived to light a fire, and found dry heather to sleep on, but the roof leaked. We cooked some of the stag's liver over the fire, in the paunch for a saucepan. There were two or three chairs, and a table with a very solid top to it, bearing some noteworthy inscriptions, for here I found, cut in it, the name of my schoolfellow Arthur Clough, and so learnt that I was really in the Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich, the subject of his poem. Near it in bold letters I read, "G. Ward Hunt," my county member, who had been one of Clough's party. To these I added my own in deep intaglio, and rejoice to think that the table-top has come south, and is honoured and preserved in an English mansion. The next day, after killing two stags, we went down, meeting the ponies as arranged, and packing the venison on them.

Stalking would be fine sport if one was left alone to find and get up to the stag—success would then be worth speaking of; but if nothing is left for the "gentlemen" to do but to move exactly as the stalker directs, and, thus "personally conducted" within range of the animal, to fire and kill him, he is a muff if he fails to do this,

and the conclusion does not differ much from shooting an ox down in a butcher's yard.

Grouse, when you spend your time among them with splendid Gordon setters, and a keen Gaelic keeper and his gillie as companions, give more real sport, though perhaps not so much excitement. For sport, however, excitement, and exercise of limbs and temper, the jack-snipe bears the bell. He is always unexpected, uncertain, and startling, and seems as likely to be brought down if you fired at random as with the most studied aim. In either case he will probably zigzag away to another soft patch, leaving you in amazement to "try again." Rabbit shooting I thought excellent sport. I agree with Lord Granville, who remarked at an agricultural dinner, when the Game Laws were like to be dragged into discussion, that from his point of view the rabbit had only one fault—namely, that he was "two inches too short."

The mention of that excellent after-dinner speaker Lord Granville prompts me to say that I have often found the House of Lords the best company and the most capable speakers at agricultural dinners, when the depressions of prices and weather seemed chronic. Their aristocratic remarks seem to rise like the lark in the summer atmosphere. They don't cry "stinking fish of their own goods," as the weaker squires so continually do. I did not hear, but I found in a local paper a year or two ago an evidence of this. Lord Lonsdale was in the chair. As usual on these festive occasions, "times were bad," and the usual remedies, scientific, legal, parliamentary, clerical, and impossible, were flying round the table, when amidst rappings, coughs, sneezes, cheers, and other encouragements, the noble lord got on his legs. After avowing his pleasure (which was real) in meeting

his tenantry, nearly all of them fox-hunters, he told them that, participating to a measure in their temporary difficulties, he had turned his mind to consider the merits of the different specifics suggested for agricultural depression. He said he found universally a difference of opinion over all of them with one exception, and that was the one he felt competent to take up—namely, rent. It seemed agreed without saying that, with rent sufficiently minimised or, better still, got rid of altogether, the farming and grazing interests could get along. Well, he said he was a creature of circumstances, and unfortunately born a landlord. He could not help that ; it was not his choice, but his fate, and without taking up time he would only ask of them when they got home to be kind enough to consider what would become of the Lowthers without rent. This good sense came home to the hearts and bosoms of the company, and was met with applause. It takes a lot of liquor to get through the sitting where a solemn landlord presides.

What I mostly remember of the year 1860 are the war and wet, both intensely interesting to me. The rain was incessant, but that did not prevent a Rifle Volunteer review at Althorp Park, promoted and encouraged by its noble owner Lord Spencer, one who fulfilled in the most constant manner all the duties of an hereditary county magnate and a trusted politician. Devoted though he was to fox-hunting as a pastime, to business and to statecraft it invariably had to give place. At the end of September there were great storms, the corn stood out in the field uncarried, much indeed uncut. This ended in a severe winter. Christmas Eve was the coldest on record. Owing to a mishap to a train, my wife and I had to walk four miles from a country

station at night. The air was quite still, but the thermometer recorded thirteen degrees below zero. This extreme of cold was most severe in Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire, where the laurels were killed to the ground, Lombardy poplars destroyed, oak trees split, and the great branches of some of the oldest deprived of life.

On the other side of the Atlantic the question of the possession of slavery in fresh territory was coming to an issue, and the arbitrament was passing from the council chamber to the battlefield. Abraham Lincoln came, as it were, out of the wilderness, a self-educated man, to take his place as the first statesman of the age. He had abandoned, with the versatility still peculiar to Americans, the occupation of rail splitter in the woods for that of town life in a store, and thence through an attorney's office and business he passed on to the practice of a barrister, that profession being united with that of attorney in the same person. He was a great reader and student of law and history. His opportunity had arrived, and he entered into political life and action with eagerness and determination. He was well fitted for the platform, a clear and impressive speaker, used the simplest and purest Saxon phraseology, and was gifted with an uncommonly retentive memory. His addresses always gathered audiences, who trooped in from miles on every side of the thinly peopled district. They were rewarded with language they could understand, with solid wisdom and merry wit, from the mouth of the ungainly giant, 6 ft. 3 in. in stature, who had given them many a proof of physical strength, now to be matched or surpassed by demonstrations of mental power and constructive ability. He was a great student of the Bible, and, as with Mr.

John Bright, the language of the Bible inspired or illustrated his utterances with its faith, poetry, and prophecy. I have often thought how effectively, if Moses had been out of the way, Lincoln could have taken his people through the long trail in the wilderness to the Promised Land. No other character in history, that I can recall, would have been equal to the business.

Some years after the war was over I made my first speech in Parliament, a short one, on a subject which I understood. I had had no practice in speaking, and I felt very uncomfortable and disturbed. However, I said, I suppose, what I wanted to say, for Mr. Bright, then in the Cabinet, from whose expressed views I had just differed, sent a friend to ask me to see him in the smoking-room. When I joined him and had been introduced, he asked me whether the country gentlemen had given me warm support, as he believed I was a Free Trader, and had independent ideas and convictions; then, referring to a close friendship between myself and another county member who had been returned, after a contest, in the place of a representative of a powerful county family, he said, "Don't you think you two gentlemen could take an independent line of your own on some of the questions of the day?" This was indeed a bold suggestion, and I met it by replying that I was quite a young politician, only just introduced into the strange excitement of the House of Commons; that I had been elected to represent an important national interest, and had ousted Mr. Gladstone's disciple with the general support of the Conservatives, given very likely under the persuasion that I was the surest person to despatch the obnoxious M.P. I told him that he would find me always seated opposite to his friends, as I felt certain I

should be of no possible service to my constituents or country if I separated myself from those with whom I generally agreed. As I turned to go away, he held out his hand to get my attention, and added, "I had to listen to your short speech, and I want to tell you, always use the Bible as you have done this afternoon." I said I was unconscious of having done so. "Oh yes, you have," he replied. "You quoted the Book of Genesis, when you reminded me that my calculations might be falsified by the 'earth bringing forth by handfuls.' " I shall have some more to say about Mr. Bright in the coming years.

To return to the Civil War in America. A year or two before I had fortunately been advised to study what Olmsted had written on slavery in the Southern States. I bought his works, and, convinced by the statement of facts and arguments, warmly adopted his views, supported as they were, not by sentimentality, but by the irresistible truths of political economy. He is a charming writer, and the view he gives is complete of the homes and domestic habits of the slave owners, and of the management and treatment of the negro population on their plantations engaged in planting, picking, packing, and shipping the cotton crop. The money value of a slave, to the owner who has bred, reared, and trained him or her, is explained, and the enormous capital that was thus in jeopardy and risked by a war, with abolition in prospect, is apparent.

There were two influences shaping action and politics—one sentimental, springing from the hearts of those whose sympathy was roused by the natural horror of consequences certain to follow on the complete subjection of an inferior to the will of a dominant race, where not only

the liberty, but the most elementary rights of mankind had no more recognition than those of domestic animals. The other and more operative influence, was the mercantile and commercial one. As matters stood, the North got nothing by the South, either by way of trade or manufacture. The owners of the negroes made their profits by the devastation and exhaustion of the natural fertility of fresh soil. They made use of no restoratives; they moved over the cultivable earth as a caterpillar over the surface of a cabbage leaf, devouring all that would sustain the invader, leaving behind nothing but a flayed skeleton. Thus the continued existence and extension of slavery depended on the acquisition and exhaustion of fresh territory with the permanent institution of slavery therein. But the wants of the slave were of the most meagre kind—the rudest tools, the simplest dress, the cheapest food. Now, as the *wants* of a nation are the source of its wealth, it was evident enough that poverty and slavery would go together, specially poverty of the soil. I think that Liebig has stated that for fifty years Virginia grew tobacco continuously, and then declined to grow anything beyond scrub. Is it to be wondered that the North disputed, and at the last resisted the arrogant claims of the South? Anyhow, I sympathised with the North, in cold blood, supported in my adhesion by the economic teaching of Olmsted, and in warm blood by my early remembrance of Wilberforce and the poetry of Cowper, who was the bard of my nursery. I soon found that I had rendered myself unpopular, for all my neighbours, the ladies without exception, were believers in the gallantry and gentlemanly bearing and character of the South. They quoted Mr. Gladstone, with his prophetic delusions as to the possi-

bility of a future Southern empire, and I sometimes thought that the ladies I took in to dinner felt I would go down lower. The upper-class opinion of Slavery in 1860 and of Free Trade in 1903 distressed me, as I thought it betrayed a want of education. With the women of the field and factory other opinions prevailed, and when these subjects were in the air I found them better company. I suppose their conditions of life had brought them to conceive in a degree what slavery and what hunger meant.

A cruel illustration of bad feeling towards the North came under my observation on the murder of the President. In the midst of a meeting of a board of guardians, news was brought into the room of Lincoln's assassination; whereupon a colleague, late an officer in the Queen's service and a county magistrate, sprang from his chair with the exulting cry of "Hurrah! hurrah!" I could only lower my head, and pay an involuntary tribute to the memory of the murdered hero, in tears. In after-years I visited his splendid memorial at his State capital, Springfield, Illinois, and in the crypt below it the first thing that met my eye was a sympathetic address on his death, signed by the mayor of my county town. In this crypt are preserved some of the measuring instruments he had used as a young man, and there too, I think, I took in my hand a portion of the dress of the actress who had rushed off the stage to his box, and lifted his poor bleeding head on her lap. The beautiful pattern and embroidery of the skirt were stained with his blood, and it stirred in me the same feelings of affection and devotion as rise to my mind when I stand in the presence of the relics of Nelson.

To return, however, to my own farming operations.

One autumn day I was with my foreman, going over a farm I rented in the Midlands, and stepping over a fence into a neighbour's field, the foreman said, "That land you are on is for sale ; it was put up to auction last week, and bought in." I walked down to the tenant's house in the village, and learned from him the reserve price put on it, which I thought not extravagant. I soon found myself an owner in a parish, which for poverty and roughness had been a by-word in the county ; some house property as well as the farm buildings became mine. The tenant, a nice old fellow, was impecunious, and the arable land exhausted and foul.

There was a small factory in the village displacing the framework knitters, but offering new employment. It was the factory and the framework knitters that I had in my mind when I bought, and I thought both might be bettered, and some of the people diverted from debt and drink. The clergyman of the parish had a miserable stipend and narrow means, but a great soul. He went with me in my suggestion to start a Provident Society, and an announcement was made that any who felt well disposed for the venture should meet me in the village. About twenty or more frame-work knitters and factory hands turned up, many of them with bare feet, for it was their habit to work so. I explained that if seven were forthcoming with one pound each, I would submit the rules to them for approval and have the society registered under the Industrial and Provident Society Act. Among other goods beer was to be sold to the members. There was some remonstrance among outsiders on this being known, but the shareholders stood by the beer, with the happy result that two beer-houses shortly after closed their doors, for the society's beer was of better quality

and returned a very great addition to the dividend. One of my farm labourers put in £13, the clergyman £1, myself £1, and about ten others £1 each. We were fortunate in our storekeeper, the committee were very capable though very humble men, and this tiny business was a success from the day of its starting. All transactions, in and out, were under the rule for ready money. I fitted up a cottage with counters, and the society found the other fixtures. Before long more room was needed, and the next cottage was added and internal communication made. The handsome dividends paid at once attracted new members from the factory and fields, and a large room I owned, adjoining the shop on its other side, was in the course of two or three years rented of me for baker's business, with an oven added, costing over £100, for which I was paid 7 per cent. on the outlay. To finish the story, one day the secretary came to say that the society would like to go into butchering on its own account; would I build a slaughter-house and shop at 7 per cent. on the outlay? In the end I told them I was afraid they were growing so fast that the original premises might ere long be found inadequate, but that I would sell all the premises and a garden behind to them, and, if they would pay a substantial deposit, I would trust them with the greater portion of the purchase money, allowing the balance to be paid off within five years by instalments at 5 per cent. interest. We closed on this, and at the end of two years the secretary wished to know if I would accept the full payment, which I did. This humble enterprise has now grown into a business with sales of over £6,000 a year. Two more important factories have been established, and two land societies for building. One rather remarkable result of the conduct of business by

the Provident Society occurred on a strike at Wolverhampton or in the Black Country which raised the wholesale price of spades. This caused indignation and so strong a feeling against strikes that the factory hands in the village have persistently refused to co-operate with the strikers in the county town. On one occasion the townsmen said they would come over and confer with the villagers, if they would meet them. The reply was that they would meet them on the road with the frame bars in their hands and do the "striking" on the spot, and so the matter ended.

I relieved the old tenant of the occupation of the arable land which I had purchased, and laid it all down to grass, except two fields which were nearly all taken by the co-operators. The society rented the land in bulk of me, and relet it in allotments at a profit. When the land societies were formed, they gave up my land, and I laid it down to grass. On the old tenant dying, I took the farm in hand, drained it, and then let it out in small holdings of ten to thirty acres. Not one farthing of rent has ever been in arrear; the holdings are for twelve months only, at the end of which period the tenant leaves or asks to renew for twelve months more. In the event of a tenant not renewing, and in the rare case of another not applying, I stocked the land myself. I have an idea that my tenants' knowledge of my being in a position to do this had its advantages. So, for over forty years, I have had business and friendly relations with these people. I was a large occupier of land myself, and they knew I could form a correct opinion of their circumstances and advise them how best occasional difficulties from a change of times could be met. After the disastrous drop in prices of 1879 and the following

years I readily allowed a reduction of rent, which has never since been put up again and is still a remunerative one.

In 1863, on March 15, the Prince of Wales married. A few days before this he was Lord Spencer's guest at Althorp, and of course went out hunting. He was a bold rider, and rather late in the afternoon a friend in pink hurried into the house to tell me that his Royal Highness was in my paddock, having led his tired horse up the hill. He passed through the house to tell my wife, who was proceeding seriously with a large hen to place her on her eggs. All she said was, "You had better go in and get something, and don't waste your time and mine by trying to take me in; I'll come to you when I have settled this hen." But before that was done, the yard was filling with horsemen, among whom she stood with the hen, still artistically confined under her shoulder. Then she got her way, and having settled the hen on her nest, went in to inquire. Meanwhile, one of the Prince's companions, finding me, told me the Prince had had a long day, and suggested a glass of sherry. I fancied the Prince was, like myself, fonder of beer in the open than of sherry, so I went off to him and, in my best manner, said as much. I could see by his face that I had done the right thing, and I sent him out an ale glass as we had them then, sparkling with the purest old bottled Burton ale, such as would asphyxiate a young man of the present day. That was my first but not my last interview with our present sovereign.*

I had been making great preparations to celebrate the wedding day. My little house, a very ugly one, stood

* Mr. Pell was the guest of His Majesty, then Prince of Wales, at Sandringham, in July, 1896.

at the edge of a hilltop, 600 and odd feet above sea-level ; below was a great basin dotted with woods and fox-covers and surrounded by a rim of hills, on which stood villages with well-timbered enclosures round them. I took great pains to induce the inhabitants, rich and poor, to co-operate in a display of fireworks, and collected over £73 for that object. With this I went to London to consult Messrs. Pain, the pyrotechnists, and procured from them many pounds of coloured fires, red, blue, and white, in powder. This I had spread on boards and placed in the covers and groves. I had plenty of mortars out of which to fire cloud-shells, and a fine battery of rockets. These fireworks were divided among the subscribing villages and marshalled on their highest spaces. At the discharge of a single rocket from my garden the display began in concert and in an arranged order, preceded, however, by the coloured fires illuminating the covers, much to the amazement of the Pytchley foxes. The night was fine and clear and the effect most striking and beautiful. Then the shells sprang up, and brilliant clouds of many hues hung over the villages, some of them scattering showers of stars and streamers. Above all this, at intervals, bouquets of the most powerful rockets whizzed up to the very stars amidst the screams of children and the approving murmurs or applause of the elders. When nothing was left of Messrs. Pain but empty, blackened cases, the large bonfires were lighted on the topmost heights, and all went home by moonlight. The display covered an area of about 3,000 acres, and was not soon forgotten.

I was now farming, as a tenant, three farms in two Midland counties, besides a third, a small one, in Cambridgeshire. As I had no "superior" bailiff, but

only a foreman, this gave me plenty to do, in addition to the charge of some freehold property in East London. I took, too, my full share in local public duties and offices.

In the next month I made my visit to the Lake country, my introductory one having come off as a boy some thirty years earlier at Eden Hall. Now the pleasure was doubled by my wife walking with me, each of us carrying our paraphernalia. Sleeping at Leeds on April 25, we were at Settle Cattle Fair by 11 o'clock on the 26th. The cattle were indeed mostly of an excellent stamp, but I could buy none, the Scotch dealers carrying away a large number at high prices ; so we went on and reached Windermere by rail at 4.30. We walked at once to Elleray and by lake to Bowness, where thirty years before the coach had put me down to breakfast.

Then it was that we made up our minds to visit, if possible, Rosthwaite every spring. Nothing that I have met with, either in the Old or the New World, surpasses it in beauty. Wordsworth becomes rather a bore there, and the guide-books are all nauseous. The Ordnance survey sheets, a good small opera-glass, nails in the shoes, and a walking-stick is a sufficient equipment. The influx of trippers of late years has not improved the accommodation, once so simple, clean, and wholesome. Large hotels with table d'hôtes and menus and coloured glasses and cigarettes and waiters in black with low shoes and white stockings and napkins have come in to stay. Still, the hills and the fells are open to flee to, and the shepherds and their dogs have not yielded to fashions. No railroad has twisted its way up to Honister. The slately stuff rattles down its precipices, as of old, and the diurnal processions of the slate-carts on their way to Keswick go creaking and screeching down the hills as of yore with

as strong a stud of horses in the shafts as England can show. There the Lent lilies among the stony edges of Derwentwater flutter in the wind, the primrose is at its best with no rival near it in the spot it has made its own, just a little pad of grass under a rock and reflected in the pool below. The parsley fern by the rugged track is the harbinger of spring, flourishing in green tufts among a wilderness of boulders rolled down on the brown sward; while higher up, where the water trickles, the butterwort erects a flower-stem above its cruel charnel-house of leaves, speckled with murdered insects. Not far away, on a patch of miry bog, there is certain to be the spectral dewwort, a thug with its flat, ruddy leaves inviting the visits of silly flies, decoyed there perhaps by the glittering fringe of beads of moisture poised at the end of tiny lances, which are ready to close down on any miserable victim that touches them.

CHAPTER X

CANDIDATE FOR PARLIAMENT

WITH the year 1865 a great scourge appeared in England which brought about in a very natural though unexpected way a great change in the occupations and objects of my life.

I had settled down in the country to a farmer's life, and had, for me, a large capital at stake in that business. I had seen for some time statements in the press of a new and terrible disorder among cattle, invariably fatal and extremely contagious. I took but small notice of this till one day I was told that it had made its appearance about five miles away and caused the loss of several animals. When, further, the report came that several cows in a lane, five miles away in another direction, had died suddenly, I woke up and bestirred myself. I did not visit either place, but by inquiry I became satisfied that the rinderpest, commonly called the cattle plague, was in the Midlands. Shortly after this I paid a visit to Norfolk and met with it there, near Lowestoft, where, without any immediate contact, cattle on one side of a wide river had been fatally infected by diseased animals on the other side. The whole country was now fairly alarmed and the newspapers full of catastrophes; entire herds were swept away, cowsheds were emptied, and the wildest and mildest suggestions made to stay the pestilence,

A Royal Commission was appointed. Fortunately Mr. Robert Lowe was a member. He, above all the others, satisfied himself that there was no known specific for the plague, no reliable means of stopping contagion or infection, and that the choice lay between killing off every infected animal as well as those in contact with them, or spending vast sums on useless precautions and allowing all the horned stock to be exterminated by disease. I studied the report and the evidence, and learnt that the county of Aberdeen, having come to the same conclusion as Mr. Lowe, had adopted as a remedy the slaughter of diseased and infected animals—with complete success; and that, having interdicted the admission of animals, healthy or not, from outside, Aberdeen was now free from the plague. I set to work vigorously to advocate the same system in England, and to discountenance reliance on or even trial of other methods, such as inoculation, drugs, isolation, transit under authorised orders over railways and highways. *The Times* newspaper had declared itself hostile to Mr. Lowe's drastic proposals, and its columns were filled with correspondence suggesting other and milder treatment. I wrote, and sent what I thought was an admirable exposition of my views. This did not appear in print, so I became restless and sent a copy off to a famous political economist, a friend. He said he knew next to nothing of the subject, but he forwarded my letter to one of the managers of *The Times*. This gentleman gave it consideration, saw the force of it, and passed it on to Delane, with an endorsement that, though the writer's views were entirely at variance with those adopted by *The Times*, he thought the letter ought to be allowed to appear in its columns; and so it did—a great step towards securing the adoption of my policy of

slaughtering. I soon saw that the landowners, powerful as they were, were not as scared as were the tenantry, whose stock-in-trade and means of living were being daily destroyed in increasing numbers, to the extent at length of 17,875 in one week. I went from market to market, town to town, with my tale on my tongue, and in time got attention. Of course, the veterinary profession, with one rare exception, decried my crusade; but, on the other hand, one agricultural society voted me forty guineas for advertising and arranging meetings. By this time, however, the subject had become one of the first national importance, and county meetings, summoned by the sheriffs, were being here and there convened. I attended one in the Midlands, and, in the face of the county leaders and chiefs, dukes, lords, squires, M.P.s, and a vast mob of followers, I moved amendments to all the cut-and-dried resolutions. The uproar was deafening. Certainly, very few of the disagreeable remarks I made could reach the ears of the audience, but I was within the hearing of the sheriff and the county magnates, and when my amendment to the last resolution was hooted down, I heard one of the kindest and most courteous peers of the realm say to a bystander, "This man knows something of the subject," whereupon an ex-Cabinet Minister, who also had been giving attention to my utterances, came forward and said to the now silent and expectant mass, "I don't think we can accept Mr. Pell's amendment, but if he will allow us to add it as a rider, I will move to have that done." Though my amendment was entirely at variance with the resolution, I assented for another purpose. A motion I knew was to follow, that a deputation, including the mover and seconder of resolutions passed, should wait on the Premier.

When this was about to be put, I ventured to ask that the author of the rider should be allowed to join in as well. My name was therefore added, no objection was raised, and I made up my mind that Lord Russell should hear what I had to say.

I next arranged and carried out a great meeting of agriculturists in a London hall. I had been taken by the Whigs to one club and by the Tories to another, and found that I had become quite an important personage ; but still I had some trouble in finding any one of high position to take the chair. At last an excellent nobleman, a Whig, consented on the assurance that I, a Tory, would not make political capital or introduce politics at the meeting. To this I gave my word, and further said that as the originator and manager of the meeting, I and those (principally farmers) who acted with me had made it a stipulation to be announced from the chair that no Member of Parliament was to be allowed to address the meeting. All went off as well as could be desired, and the leader in *The Times* next morning was not an unfavourable one. The Government was drafting a Bill to be introduced at once, intended to stop the progress of the plague. Killing, however, was not its principal provision.

Lord Russell gave the deputation, of which I was one, an audience, and very kindly the introducer, after others had had their say, suggested that I might add my remarks. Upon this I at once expressed my hopes that the Government would follow the example set by ministers many years back, and take power in their Bill to suppress the rinderpest by slaughter. Lord Russell replied that this method had never been resorted to. I said it had on the second invasion of cattle plague, and that an

Italian physician, writing to Sir Joseph Banks, had referred to this treatment as a wise and efficient one adopted by the English people, "*gens strenua ac severa*," by which the disease had been killed out and the English herds saved. I was now in the confidence of some leading M.P.s, and with their help a Bill was drafted and introduced for compulsory slaughter of diseased and infected animals. The end of it was that a measure, adopted, I think, by the Government, received the Royal assent in a very short time, and the killing out commenced. This Act, the Cattle Diseases Prevention Act, 1866, was put in operation on February 20, 1866. On February 21, 17,875 were returned as attacked. By April 7 the numbers fell to 6,670, and in a few weeks to nil.

The need for some organisation through which the views of tenant farmers and owners of land could be made known became evident, and the Central Chamber of Agriculture was established, with affiliated chambers in many of the English counties. The next year, 1867, a member who had, for a long time, represented an English county died, and those who had benefited by my advice and exertions in exterminating the rinderpest thought I might be of further service to them in Parliament, and so I was put forward as a candidate. The suggestion was not received with the same lively enthusiasm by the landlords generally, though I had willing promises of support from some of that class. A considerable landowner, who was also a banker of great wealth, was in the field at once. Before the vacancy he had cleverly obtained many signatures to a requisition inviting him to come forward from electors holding conservative opinions who never dreamt of a contest.

The time for canvassing was very limited, and the registration had been shamefully neglected by my side—numbers were on the roll on the opposite side with qualifications that disappeared the following year on objections. A very large and important borough in the division was the metropolis of dissent, a radical stronghold, having in it 1,500 county voters as freeholders. Many of the factory hands owned the houses in which they resided. These had yards with a shed or outhouse at the back, which, let off to neighbours and friends, conferred a county qualification. In another case, half a dozen were on the register as joint owners of one house in the borough town. I put out an address, and on learning that if I could enlist the suffrages of 500 of the borough freeholders I should carry the day, I turned my attention mainly to their views and fancies. In the end I polled 500 of them, but I lost the election by less than forty votes.

It may be worth recording the abstract of the two statements of Election expenses on this occasion, as showing how materially they were reduced by voluntary assistance. Mine were approximately as published by the High Sheriff :

						£	s.	d.
Agents and expenses out of pocket	..	..	..	..	..	1020	0	0
Canvassers .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	112	0	0
Clerks .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	40	0	0
Carriages and Horses	..	..	..	..	..	483	0	0
Stationery, Printing, and Advertising	..	..	..	..	..	105	0	0
Miscellaneous Claims	..	..	..	..	..	473	0	0
Railway Passes	..	..	..	..	..	91	0	0
Total	..	..	..	..	..	£2324	0	0

My opponent's were :

						£	s.	d.
Advertising	..	..	..	..	..	93	0	0
Canvassing	..	..	..	..	..	475	0	0
Posters, Printing, Stationery	..	..	..	..	..	245	0	0
Committee Rooms and Expenses	..	..	..	..	..	340	0	0
Legal Agency	..	..	..	..	..	550	0	0
Clerks and Secretary	..	..	..	..	..	159	0	0
Returning Officer	..	..	..	..	..	233	0	0
Registers	..	..	..	..	..	99	0	0
Conveyance of Voters (further claims to pay)	..	..	..	..	..	879	0	0
Messengers and Runners	..	..	..	..	..	277	0	0
Telegrams and Postage	..	..	..	..	..	106	0	0
Hotel Bills and Refreshments	..	..	..	..	..	77	0	0
Miscellaneous Expenses	..	..	..	..	..	129	0	0
Total	..	..	..	..	..	£3513	0	0

The General Election was a certainty next year, so immediately on my defeat the county Conservatives held meetings for the selection of a candidate, while I attended the markets as a matter of business. A desire was expressed to bring forward a very considerable proprietor, a thorough gentleman, but of rather a retiring disposition and with hardly nerve enough for the roar and chaff of the hustings. This, of course, was before the ballot. The situation was saved, however, by several determined men of position stating at once that they should vote for me and for no one else. As the farmers went home from market one Saturday winter evening, they felt satisfied that their cause had passed beyond the soothing promises and flattery of agricultural dinners and party meetings, that it had penetrated into the range of practical politics, and was now under the charge of an advocate engaged in their own business.

The year 1868 was a remarkably fine and hot one, most suitable for rural canvassing. I made a start in March,

and before the day of nomination had canvassed personally every parish, I might almost say every voter, favourable and doubtful. I purged the register of over 400 names which had no legal claim to appear on it, and had the promises of support from many who had, in 1867, been hurried into a requisition to my successful opponent to stand for the county, and had polled for him.

The most trying feature of the canvass was not the unceasing moving about and speaking, or the angry and sometimes dangerous exhibition of hostility and temper, but the repeated invitations to "take something to drink," commencing as early as ten or eleven o'clock in the morning, and becoming more pressing as the day went on, and absolutely urgent and irresistible after sunset. How devoutly I wished that the prohibition of treating a voter had been extended by law so as to forbid the treating of a candidate. If, as I was told, it was impolitic and ungracious altogether to refuse the liquor, on one occasion I was much amused in making a choice. I was taken by my friends to pay my compliments to a farmer, decidedly hostile, who had, nevertheless, encouraged an interview. As I approached his premises in the afternoon of a blazing day, I saw my man from a distance in an open shed in his shirt-sleeves, seated on a stool, with a milk-pail between his knees, his head in a stove-pipe hat, battered by pressure against the cow's flank, and his hands at work as if he was playing the bagpipes. Milk was always a restorative with me, and I was tired as well as very thirsty. I was shown into the parlour, swept the dust off my shoes, put on a mingled expression of pleasure and dignity, and awaited the ordeal of an interview with two farming friends by my

side. In a few minutes Mr. Smith came. He concealed the annoyance which I knew I should have myself felt, being called away from the job he had in hand, and disguised his extreme dislike for me and my politics under a treacherous smile, a violent shake of the hand, and the boisterous inquiry, "What will you have to drink?" I said, "Mr. Smith, I am much obliged to you for giving me the choice. As I have no doubt you brought the pail into the house, I should like above everything, except the promise of your vote, a mug of milk." "Oh!" he exclaimed, "you are very welcome; but I'm damned if I vote for a man who drinks milk." This amused me a good deal, though it left no doubt as to the party to which he belonged.

The political question exciting most interest, in the immediate prospect of a General Election, was the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Irish Church, to which Mr. Gladstone was committed. The non-conforming community was almost entirely, with one or two exceptions, bitterly hostile to my party, and I could tell pretty accurately the number of votes they would record against me. The mob, however, did not to a man shout with my adversary. I was known to be a convinced Free Trader, and the people were also aware that I was an active promoter of distributive co-operation. No sooner was my address out than I found in the windows of provident societies, stores, and shops, as well as in some of the members' houses, a poster denouncing me as "no friend to the poor," and full of other disparaging statements. Going into one of the principal co-operative shops in the workmen's quarter, and taking the poster in my hands, I asked the store-keeper if he knew the gentleman it referred to. "Not I," was his reply;

“but I know he is no count.” “Well,” I said, “I do know him, and I wonder you don’t, for he founded the eighth provident society in this county in a miserably poor factory village, where it seems likely to become a flourishing concern; and if you will look in at a certain public-house not far off, you will find the secretary there, who will tell you all about it, and about the candidate of whom this poster speaks so ill. I don’t think this is quite the place to display it.” Two days after this every poster had been withdrawn, and I found friends among a powerful and exemplary class. The farmers condoned my Free Trade tendencies and the operatives rejoiced in them, so my opponent had to omit any electioneering remarks on these points of my belief.

If my prospects were bright and encouraging among the rural voters, they were somewhat shady among the urban populace. Some, if not most, of the factory masters were decidedly hostile, and gave full effect to their influence as employers in securing votes for my opponent. Secret voting was still in the future, and each elector had to reckon with the consequences of his action at the hustings. When work was short, the stocking-frames of the framework knitters who disregarded the political solicitations or hints of their master stood silent and idle for weeks at a time. From them frame rents and cottage rents were collected with unusual promptitude; while indulgence was shown to debtors who were more amenable to persuasion by the landlords and money-lending partisans of either side.

On the whole, it seemed, there was very little evidence of flagrant corruption. I was only twice directly asked for a bribe to secure a vote—in both cases by women and for a guinea, which I was told I might drop as I went out

behind the open front door, where a mop would prevent any sound of its fall. The editor of a newspaper, writing to me that he was in need of temporary assistance to push its circulation during the excitement of the times, besought the loan of £10. As the person to whom a loan is made becomes very often an enemy, I preferred to give a present of £5, though I could ill afford it.

With Mr. Gladstone's impending attack on the Irish Church, I could not expect anything but determined opposition from Nonconformists, but I believe that, indirectly, my position was strengthened by an incident that arose out of this bitter controversial conflict. A very able speaker who had left the dissenting community and become an ordained minister of the Church of England was engaged to deliver a public address on the Disestablishment of the Irish Church. I was asked, and consented, to preside at the meeting, which was advertised far and wide on the walls of the town. The largest possible type was used for displaying the names of lecturer and chairman. I felt certain that there would be a scene and a real row. Some of my clerical friends who were to appear with me on the platform met in committee an hour before the "doors opened." The programme was decided on, and it was suggested that the meeting should open with prayer. I remonstrated, and warned the clergyman who proposed to officiate that if he got on his knees, the audience would, in all likelihood, not allow him to get on his legs again. Finally, to save time and discussion, I said that as soon as I was in the chair I should call on the lecturer to proceed with his address.

The meeting was held in a very large hall, holding possibly 2,000 persons. There was the usual dais or

platform, with orchestral benches rising tier on tier at the back, and there was my chair, a very heavy and important one, at the front. There was the pit below, packed with raging Radicals, and there was the gallery above, running along the two sides, and uniting at the end in a larger gallery, fitted with tiers of seats. In a trough below the dais was the press, with sharpened pens and features; above them from the front edge of the dais rose several stout gas-standards with great jets of unprotected flame spouting from their burners. The dais was black with clergy of, I thought, more than one denomination, and none, I fancy, of even the rank of a rural dean. Immediately a citizen possessed of strong lungs moved that Mr. So-and-so do take the chair. This was seconded. I was allowed to rise amid groans, but I was able to make the meeting understand that I had been advertised as chairman, and that I did not intend to be superseded by any resolution of the meeting. From that moment for two continuous hours, till the gathering broke up, the hall was a pandemonium. But in some ways it was an amusing pandemonium. One of the most violent disturbers was a citizen well known from the remarkable coincidence of his stores and goods having been on more than one occasion burnt, after being well covered by insurances. He was nearly bald, but a few stray bristles stood on end on his shining skull. His excitement was extravagant as he called on his friends to insist on appointing a chairman, and then branched off into denunciations of Mr. Disraeli and his lot. At last he had to pull up to take breath; panting and with inflamed features he had climbed on to the very edge of the reporters' trough, and to steady himself he grasped with one hand the gas-standard, the

flame of which was thus only a few inches above his bare head. This was an opportunity not to be lost for an appropriate joke. "Take care, Mr. —," shouted a voice from the pit, "you will set your hair on fire, and you know that is not insured." The orator subsided at once.

By degrees my clerical friends left the platform and were replaced by the mob. Among them I noticed thirteen men dressed somewhat alike, with greasy caps on their heads. They edged their way together till they surrounded me, intending, as I thought, to force me out of the chair. Their leader got so close that his elbow touched mine. The noise and clamour were deafening. That I did not mind; my first object now was to keep the chair. How could I best do it? Taking the collar of the leader, I drew his head down near mine, and then said to him, "I want to tell you that if the attempt is made to drag me out, whatever may come of it, I will certainly kill you." "Lord," he said, "kill me! Why, I and my pals are here to protect you. We are from — [the next county town]. We don't believe in any Church or God either. We want the reverend gent to make his speech, and then I mean to follow and upset him. You keep where you are." By this time, however, the reverend gent was wisely stooping down over the trough and delivering his speech condensed to the reporters. I shouted to him, "It's all over; let us go." He was quite composed, and, beginning to move off, I joined him with some cheers, and, escorted by the thirteen disciples of Mr. Bradlaugh, as the gas was being turned down, got into the street and away.

Though the Established Church in Ireland did not gain much by this meeting, it gave me a good introduction

to the non-electors. I had committed myself by no indiscreet speech ; and while the Conservative newspapers filled the column with the lecturer's address, all the opposition one had to say was that their readers must be convinced by my conduct, by my contemptuous disregard of the acknowledged right of the meeting to choose the chairman, and by my obstinacy in claiming and retaining that office, that I had prevented an intelligent and orderly gathering of the citizens from the enjoyment of what promised to be an instructive evening, and proved how utterly unfit I was to represent any constituency in Parliament.

The election came on shortly after this, the canvass was completed, the hustings erected. I was in good spirits, and really looked forward with pleasure to meeting the people face to face at the nomination. A good deal of betting was going on on the event, the cattle people, graziers and butchers, laying freely in my favour, and they were an important body, attending as they did all markets, and frequenting inns, public-houses, and railway carriages. I was elected by a considerable majority, girt with a sword as knight of the shire, and again put in an appearance on the hustings with my loyal colleague. What I remember best was the beaming faces of those who had won their bets. One very cherry-cheeked butcher, in his delight, kissed a perspiring chimney-sweep, leaving a round white spot where his ecstatic lips had absorbed the soot. A body of police had been sent to escort the two M.P.s away, but there was no occasion for such precaution. After my return, not before, I received very generous offers of contributions towards election expenses from all classes. I declined them all, though much needed, believing that by accepting I

might part with my political freedom. Subsequent experience convinced me that M.P.s who were subscribed for (I do not say nominees of influential men) were placed in a somewhat servile position.

This was in the last week of November. Parliament was to meet on December 10, 1868, and at two o'clock on that day my colleague, giving my name, passed me in with an old schoolfellow, the member for another division of my county, who sat on one side of me. On the other side was a friend, Mr. Clare Sewell Read, M.P. for Norfolk; opposite was Mr. McCombie, of Aberdeen, old, shaggy, and thoughtful. I shook hands with Mr. George Ward Hunt, who congratulated me, and the Speaker was chosen. On the 11th I took the oath and then went down to my farming business in the country.

Before the year closed I made the acquaintance of Dr. Magee, recently appointed to the Bishopric of Peterborough. We travelled into the county town together, where he was to consecrate a new church. We took to each other at once—the new Bishop and the new M.P. He questioned me about clerical differences and contentions, which had become very acute in the town, and said he knew the Low Church party had gone so far as to bring down a famous Evangelical to expound from the pulpit—not a bad card, he thought. “Oh!” I said, “Bishop, the High Church soon trumped that card with an ace, in the person of Mr. Macconochie.” “Aye,” he bounced out, “you may call it the ace, but I assure ye,” with an Irish eye and tongue, “it played the deuce with the Church.” Then he turned his head suddenly away to the window, as if he thought he was not discreet in being so unreserved with a stranger. We became great friends. I saw his attention fixed on a large

inscription on a factory, "Elastic Web Factory," in a street we passed through to the new church. There we separated : he for the pulpit ; I for the pew, to hear for the first time his moving eloquence. I forget the text, but not the sermon. The subject was a not unkind or uncharitable illustration of the characteristics of the Established Church and the varied doctrines of Nonconformists. The one he likened to a knitted garment warm and elastic, fitting itself to all the members and movements of the human being, and as age wore it away still with its last fibres clinging closely to the wearer. The other, he said, serviceable as it was when of good material, had to follow a fashion in its make ; the disciple had to be measured and the garment was put together in pieces with stitches. When these, not always strong, gave way, the garment became comfortless, and bit by bit disappeared.

Talking of our coming into Parliament together, I said that the part I had taken in local duties as a constable (special), overseer of the poor, surveyor of highways, churchwarden, guardian, justice of the peace, and the time and thought spent in the business of farming, and in the care of very humble land property, had really been a good preparation for the House of Commons, especially as, on the subjects that interested me, I had been, as well, a persistent reader of books. The Bishop thought this training was valuable, and that his own had been so also, and added, "When I look along the bench of my reverend brothers in the House of Lords, learned as they are, I feel that many have had but a limited experience of the life and practice of a clergyman in its great variety, while I reflect that it was my lot, as one of the "inferior clergy," to fill many posts—curate in Ireland,

and in my steps upwards even running a venture chapel in a fashionable watering-place, where my faculty of expressing myself stood me in good stead. But here I am in lawn sleeves, and mitre if I choose to wear it, and call to mind my first charge in Tipperary. I had just been ordained, and began to go round to make acquaintance with my people. I came on one digging his potato patch. 'A fine day, and luck to you!' I began. 'It is fine land, anyhow, you are on—really good now.' 'Ah! your Riverince,' was the immediate reply, 'bedad, it is that. If the prophet Jeremiah had had but one acre of it, he never could have written that book of Lamentations.' "

On February 15, 1869, was the opening of Parliament—a most beautiful spring day. I walked to the House in good time for the Queen's Speech. There was a great crush, and all seemed strange and almost riotous to me. It was public-school life over again. I fell in with no acquaintance in the central lobby, but was struck with the civility and attentions of the police. At last the procession started from the Commons, headed by the Speaker in his robes and his train-bearer. I joined in the rush pursuing him, giving him, as a witty little paper, *The Owl*, reported, very little "law." I got a good start, elbowing, I make no doubt, many distinguished persons, and was brought up with much vehemence against the bar of the House of Lords almost alongside of Mr. Speaker. As her Majesty was not on the throne, I paid no attention to the speech, but looking round, found an old schoolfellow—"Little Glyn" we called him at Rugby—at my elbow. He had been our "hare" at "hare and hounds," and a happy thought came into my mind. I was so pinned by the Speaker on one side

and Glyn on the other that I could not shake hands with him. Thirty years, however, had not effaced the recollection of his running powers and the breathless chases I had made after him, so I said to him, "Here we are again, and I will run you for sixpence back to the door of the Commons." "Done!" was his cheerful reply. So, giving time for Mr. Speaker and his crew to get back to the House, we started fair, and tore like pickpockets through the crowd of gazing strangers; the police had not time nor presence of mind to shout "Make way for members" till we pulled up with a jerk at the door of the House, startling the old white-headed guardian out of his senses. From that moment, however, I was known to the officials and police as the new member. I took my seat that day below the gangway, but next to it.

On March 1 I heard Mr. Gladstone speak in the debate on the Irish Church. I was much impressed by the eloquent peroration, as well as by the way in which it was delivered. The gesture, the sort of inspiration in its utterance, and the unhesitating flow of his arguments smote me. I had never set eyes on him till I entered Parliament, and I watched and examined so great an object of interest with the closest attention. I marvelled at the construction of many of the sentences, their length, precision, and obscurity till, at the close, out came the governing verb or phrase, the key to his idea. It was to me a strain to follow him, and I much preferred Mr. Bright's style. I thought Mr. Gladstone, as he stood at the table, was a fine specimen of physical power and vigour, and the least I liked about him were his features. I thought then, and to the end of his day, that they were those of a rather acrid Nonconformist. I was a little afraid of him, too. Once on a fine summer day, in walk-

ing up Regent Street, I found him in front of me. We were both quick walkers, and as I followed I was struck with the firm, manly step and the muscular action that his dress could not conceal. No one seemed to recognise him except a cabman, who pointed at him with his whip. He held on his course as steadily as an American liner till we reached the circus. I was making for Portland Place, so crossed Oxford Circus with him. On the other, the north side, was a shop, all the windows of which were filled with sponges, nothing else whatever was exhibited. Opposite this he pulled up dead, and gazed with intense curiosity at the sponges ; he was as fixed and rapt as a cat at a canary in its cage. I went on, leaving him motionless on the pavement.

The late Mr. Bagehot, on hearing that Mr. Gladstone composed his speeches on his legs, remarked, "No doubt, for it is the only leisure time Gladstone has at his disposal." Mr. Bagehot was an impartial critic, for of Gladstone's great rival he said, "Disraeli's chaff is excellent, his corn is worthless."

Mr. Vernon Harcourt (afterwards Sir William) entered Parliament at the same time as myself. He sat below the gangway opposite to me. He was a fine, tall figure in a frock-coat, with a bit of his white handkerchief peeping out of his breast pocket. He spoke with arrogance and assurance, rather too pompously, I thought ; but there was matter and wit in what he said. We began a long acquaintance and friendship in rather a singular incident. A member on a select committee on which Harcourt was serving was taken ill, and I was ordered to fill his place. The Bill under consideration was a Birds' Preservation Bill, and when I joined, half the clauses had been settled. A messenger conducted me

to the room, and, as soon as I entered, a chair was pointed out to me, and I sat down in utter ignorance of my duties and the forms of procedure. A clerk brought me the Bill, and pointed with his finger to the clause under discussion. Mr. Beresford Hope sat next me with a little book of birds in his hand, illustrated. Most of the members, I noticed, had similar books. I looked at the clause, and was astonished to find that it was made penal for any one to be found in possession of a defunct scheduled bird. The chairman, too, was asking, "Any other amendment?" Every one seemed complacent and satisfied. I was not, and said so in a bungling way. The chairman seemed irritated, but asked me pointedly, Had I any amendment to move? adding that as the clause had been gone through, the amendment must come at the end of it. "Well, sir," I said, "yes, I have," and was told I should write it down and hand it up, which I did in these words, "unless the bird shall have died by the visitation of God." He frowned over this, and asked whether I really meant it. I said, "Undoubtedly." So he read it out and put it to the committee. In a moment Harcourt left his chair, hurried round, and forcing himself in between me and Beresford Hope, whispered, "That will do! Stick to it! They're a damned lot of prigs!" He gave the amendment all his support, and the clause went to pieces.

Harcourt well knew that one road to office was by skillfully tormenting your own party, not by voting, but in debate. The Government introduced and carried a Conspiracy Bill, the principle of which was that a combination of persons to carry out an object was not *per se* illegal, and that conspiracy consisted in persons combining to do that which it was illegal for one person to do individually. At this time a new bye-law was in force,

making the use of soap in bathing in the Serpentine an offence. Harcourt, rising with much gravity, opposed the Bill (really an excellent one), and with his arms folded, turned towards the Treasury Bench and ridiculed the proposal, asking the Home Secretary whether, as it was illegal for one person to bathe in the Serpentine with soap, he seriously intended that the fact of two gentlemen uniting in the purchase of *one* cake of soap for use between them in that water should constitute conspiracy. I forget the answer he got, if any, but this sally gave us some relaxation in the midst of hours of prosy declamation.

I was embarrassed by the number of circulars sent to me upon every sort of subject, as well as by lithographed and written correspondence, many on subjects with which I was wholly unacquainted. I consulted a friend of some experience, and he said they might be serviceable if I answered on a postcard headed, "House of Commons." The village post-office and the letter-priers there would learn that I was in my place attending to my public duties and the interests of the county. I refused all requests to allow my name to appear on appeals as a patron, and never entered a bazaar. I once, however, had to pay 19s. for a telegram following me on a canvassing tour, pressing me to come at once to a bazaar where my opponent was making himself exceedingly popular.

A prosy, opinionated member on his legs caused his hearers much irritation, and many were the devices used to get rid of him. These, however, had little or no effect on some of the old hands. Their speeches, having probably festered for some days in their minds, when the opportunity came, were delivered with

infinite satisfaction and relief to themselves. Still, I was amazed at their indifference to the reiterated shouts of "Divide! divide!" separated by a lull from another gusty volley. This was kept up at regular intervals till the orator had completed his innings. I then better appreciated a story I had been told some years before about Sir John Bowring, who was a terrible talker. The Khedive of Egypt had more than once suffered under his prolixity, but having visited the House of Commons, when Sir John at a subsequent meeting commenced as usual, the Khedive in despair began exclaiming "Divide! divide!" and persisted till he reduced Sir John to silence.

CHAPTER XI

LIFE IN PARLIAMENT

IN 1869 there was great distress down the River Thames at Poplar, owing to the closing of two large shipbuilding yards—Dudgeons', I think, was one. This threw a large number of men out of work. Many of them had been farm labourers, and had left the land for better pay as riveters in the railway works at Ashford. Thence the most skilled had migrated with better prospects to the shipbuilding yards, and for a while were making substantial incomes and renting comfortable houses. At last, however, the crash came, and nothing could be earned. The days for Mansion House funds and other ventures for generally endowing the unemployed had not yet come. Unostentatious beneficence instead came to the rescue in such serious calamities as this, and a few families of birth and distinction took upon themselves the responsibility and charge of giving these people a fresh start in life. They decided that this would be best done by enabling the men and their families to emigrate to Canada, for which they provided, if my memory serves me, a fund of some thousand pounds. From my acquaintance and connection with that district of London it was thought well to apply to me to act as almoner, and I was satisfied with the assurance that the aid would be given in this way only and that its bestowal would be made only after my personal inquiry into each case.

I commenced with a notice to applicants that I would

attend at a district church every Thursday and meet a given number there. On their arrival I took the names and allotted a pew to each case, keeping them well apart. The interview took place in the vestry, where I entered all the particulars, as given me, in writing. Further independent inquiry corroborated the statements, some of which were remarkable. I pressed all to inform me how they lived apart from debt since they had failed of employment. One man told me, "On a mirror." His little home had been well furnished with an imposing mirror above the mantel-piece. This was one of the first sacrifices to want, and brought in over a pound. Several had musical instruments. Such superfluities were parted with before the furniture, and last of all the bedding went. As soon as I was able to decide on a case, I gave the applicant a certificate, which he presented to the secretary of the fund, and then family batches were made up and conveyed to the Midland Railway station, whence under the charge of one of the contributors, a lady, they went on to Liverpool and were put on board an Allan Line steamboat, with which company a contract had been made for their conveyance to Canada.

When I had gone through and disposed of all the cases submitted to me, on the last day, as I was leaving the church, a woman came in. Her dress and manner and her complexion were unlike any of those I had been seeing. She at once said she hoped I would be able to give her help, as she was a widow with no means. Her late husband, she said, was a "vanner" (like Mrs. Jarley). There were no children, and under need she had parted with horse and van. She was very good-looking and outspoken. I explained

at once to her that the money I had at my disposal was intended for a particular purpose and class, and that indeed it was all gone. She pleaded very earnestly for help, adding that she could begin life again in Canada with a certain prospect of independence, and "Oh! pray, pray, sir, give me a start!"

That meant putting down £6, which I could not afford, but I told her I might spare £3, and would see if any one would make it up to £6. The name of Mr. Samuel Morley, M.P., was in men's mouths as a bountiful philanthropist, so I determined to begin with him. As I did not know him even by sight, the doorkeeper pointed him out, and I went at once to him in the midst of a debate. It was an awkward thing to manage. I began with my name and apologies, and at once I took the great liberty of asking his assistance in a case which I thought justified my doing so. He was a little restless; so I went on at once to say that £6 was wanted, and that I would give half. "Well," he said, "I cannot attend to you now, but I will join you with £3, and at some other time tell me the circumstances." I at once secured and paid the passage for the woman, and a few weeks afterwards, meeting Mr. Morley in the lobby, I told him the circumstances and how this woman had come to appeal to me. He at once paid me the £3, and then added that he was so well satisfied with the emigration scheme that he would give me £100 towards it; but I told him all had been done that was needed, and I could not accept his generous offer. This seemed to astonish him as something beyond his experience in begging methods.

In September of this year (1869) with a friend, another M.P., I went over to Ireland to make myself better ac-

quainted with the land question. We had excellent introductions to some of the most important properties. The day after we reached Dublin there was to be a large auction of pedigree and other rams, which we attended for the opportunity it afforded of meeting many leading farmers and breeders. The auctioneer's commendations of the lots as they came in the ring were most amusing. I remember he dwelt some time on the perfections of one huge sheep (short-woolled), the chief of which was the closeness of his fleece, impervious to wet. "You see him, gentlemen," he shouted. "He gets up in the morning after the wettest night, shakes himself, and makes his toilet in a moment."

That afternoon we left Dublin by rail in a third-class carriage. Our companions were two natives, each possessed of the national weapon and excited by the national drink. They began at once a discussion as to whether they were in a "mail" train or no, of course taking opposite views. Neither would yield, and there was a good deal of violent action, ending before long by their getting on their legs and grasping their shillelaghs to give emphasis to their assertions. My friend and I cowered in the farthest corners, but just at this crisis, one of them, putting his blackthorn under his arm, appealed to demonstration as conclusive. "Are ye denying it?" he said. "I am," says the other with a scowl. "Well, then, I'll prove to you. Put a stamp on your forehead and see if ye are not flung out at the next station for a letter." In a moment they became the best of friends, but we changed our carriage at the next stop.

I took a fancy to the Douay priests we met at dinner at friends' houses, but not at all to the Maynooths. The

former were, of course, very witty, and not intolerant. In my simplicity I then thought that, on the disendowment of the Irish Church, some of its funds would have been well applied to the permanent income of these ministers of religion, and I think so still ; but the dominant assurance and conceit of the Protestant community made that out of the question. I heard much of the withholding by parishioners of the dues that formed so large a part of the income of the priest. One charming gentleman mentioned a grievous defaulter who had the means to pay, but did not, and how he successfully dealt with him. After describing in his sermon the everlasting joys of heaven and contrasting them with the anguish of the condemned, he drew a picture of the departed Christian presenting himself at the portals of heaven and seeking admittance. After several knocks at the portals, the blessed Peter from the inside demanded, " Who is there ? " " Patrick Brophy," was the reply, and Patrick was in an ecstasy when he heard the key put in the lock ; but before it was turned another question came, " Are ye the Patrick Brophy of Ballyfoil, County Mayo, that did not pay your priest his dues ? " " I am that." Then as the key was withdrawn came the awful doom, " You'll not enter here." The next morning the dues were paid. A very burly priest on a steamboat on Lough Corrib before going ashore assured me that his flock were more causes of anxiety to him than " sources of emolument."

I had made several previous visits to Ireland, one as early as in 1833, though that was confined to Ulster ; another to Tipperary in 1843 or 1844. The country struck me as little altered, except by the great reduction of its population and the consequent abandonment of small potato patches which had tumbled down to grass

and moss in melancholy ridges on the boggy land. Though I did not see any "drawing by the tail," I did see a woman and a cow attached, side by side, to a harrow, which they together dragged over the furrows, while the husband leant against a broken fence smoking a pipe. The pigs were charming as house-holders, paying the rent; with their intelligence and independence they had better qualification for the suffrage than some of their owners. The horned cattle had much improved. The old Irish stock, with the mixture of dull yellow, brown, and black in streaks down its ungainly ribs, was much less in evidence, and was giving place to the richly coloured shorthorn, while the native black Kerry cattle held their own in improved condition and numbers. The Border Leicester sheep were spreading over the districts suited to them, and especially favoured Roscommon. The queer custom of building, by the roadside, two imposing pillars of stone at the approach to a very insignificant mansion, standing at the end of a broken avenue of wind-twisted trees, was almost universal. Sometimes a gate hung on one hinge from these derelict posts, but as frequently they stood alone, and hardly ever did a fence flank them on either side. This useless apparatus has its parallel in the United States, where, on the illimitable and uninhabited prairie, at intervals of some miles, a balanced bar swings by the side of the unfenced railway track, with a notice in large letters, "Beware of the cars." At these spots, too, to complete the farce, the driver has to sound the big bell on the engine to warn the wilderness of danger.

We paid a most interesting visit of some days to Mr. Philip Reade at his place, Woodpark, County Clare, on the shore of Lough Derg. Our host was a fine, tall

man advanced in years, a Tory, and a friend of the Duke of Wellington. There could be no better example of a loyal resident land-owner, with a fine estate in Clare and Galway, discharging in a resolute manner all the duties belonging to that position. His description of the state of things in the troubled times, when the great famine of 1847 was killing off his people like flies, was beyond measure distressing. We went with him by railway to Killaloe, and thence in his carriage along the shores of Lough Derg to Scariff, his next parish, where, he told us, 6,000 persons were buried, the victims of famine, in two parishes alone. He had been engaged in the measures taken to save life by relief funds. They did not seem altogether the best that could be devised, as the dole of meal was accompanied by the exaction of labour. On the shore of the lough we saw pyramids of stones at spaces of some hundred yards, and it was required of the miserable, starving creatures, as a test of destitution, that they should carry, one by one, all the stones of one heap to form another, and so back again. Thus when all the sustenance of the meal should have been husbanded to keep the flame of life alight, much of it was exhausted and wasted in the support of muscular action. In spite of his persevering devotion to his people's rescue, he had been shot at through his dining-room window and fired at again, as he lay, till seven slugs were in or through his body, two touching his lungs. He was saved by a courageous cook dragging him through the door into the hall, and he survived to be a hearty old man. Two land-agents dined with us as his guests one evening. One told me his father had been shot, but not killed.

Ten years ago a cruel murder happened at the

village close to Woodpark. An attorney, a lawyer of Dublin, had a small property there, and he was in the habit of making an annual excursion, to visit it and stay for some days' holiday as a lodger in the village. One day, on the woman of the house failing (probably intentionally) to fetch the milk for tea, he went out with a jug in his hand, and, crossing the green in the full daylight and in sight of all the surrounding houses, he was attacked by a band, struck down, and his head beaten into the soft turf, leaving its impression there when he was removed, as Mr. Reade himself saw. The news of the murder reached him speedily, and feeling sure that the poor fellow's cattle would be "lifted," he at once took men with him, some mounted, to give chase. The place was as quiet as if nothing had happened, with the dead body still on the green. The cattle were followed for some miles and recovered. There was an inquest, but I think nothing came of it. In a day or two the widow arrived to bury her husband. The coffin was made, and in it the corpse was taken by her for burial to the parish churchyard. There a mob met them, and drove away the funeral from two graveyards. Nothing remained but to take the body in a boat to Holy Island, in Lough Derg, and there, among the ruins of the seven churches with the fine round tower in their centre, it was laid to rest. Even then the tragedy was not complete nor vindictiveness fully satisfied. In a month or so a headstone came from Dublin with the name and age of the victim inscribed thereon, and a statement on it that he had been murdered. Thereupon an announcement was made that, unless that record was obliterated, the body would be dug up and thrown into the lough,

and the stone with it. The stone was removed and replaced by an inoffensive one which I myself saw, stating that the murdered man departed this life, aged 39.

Two young Irish ladies, sisters or cousins, came to stay the night. Their education had been completed in a convent; they were both heiresses, were very well informed, spoke French well, and I dare say played the Irish harp. They were beautifully dressed and just coming out in the world, to fit them for which no care had been spared. I had the honour of taking one in to dinner, my friend the other. When I came to mention my visit to Holy Island, she turned towards me and said in a very serious way, "Oh! I know all about that story. I was a child then, but I went to see the place the day after, and there was quite a hole where his head had been driven in. I think he deserved to be murdered. He had turned out widows." This from the mouth of a quiet girl, just out of a convent school, uttered in the conversation at the dinner-table of her host, seemed perfectly natural to the other guests and called for no remark. My friend had the other young lady for his companion at table. When the party broke up, I went to his bedroom to tell him how I had been startled, and then he informed me of what had passed between him and his heiress. He had been saying what a pleasant prospect was before her, and how she must be looking forward to a season in London; upon which he was promptly brought up by her declaration that she never wanted to see London. She would not mind Paris, but felt she should like New York vastly.

On February 15, 1870, Mr. Gladstone introduced his Irish Land Bill in a speech of three hours' length, to

which I listened with wonder and surprise. Then began in the House of Commons his wild Irish career, which terminated some years after in his Home Rule surrender, which wrecked the Liberal Party, and caused the defection of their best men, Hartington, Goschen, Forster, and others.

A month afterwards I attended a great meeting of Conservative members called together at the house of Lord Lonsdale in Carlton Terrace. *The Owl* gave a delightful account of this gathering. It began by describing the excitement of the party, the run on the old brown sherry at the Carlton, and the animation of all who hurried to the "meet"; how when they reached the fine room upstairs, the new members betrayed their want of acquaintance with such an imposing function; how they were diffident of approaching the green baize-covered table, behind which were arranged the seats for their leader, an ex-Cabinet Minister; how the old hands irreverently made jokes during the delay; how they offered odds that Sir George Jenkinson (like myself, a new member) would be the first to speak, and the odds were taken freely; how then, as many hung back in a cluster at the rear, overcome with modesty, Lord John Manners with much courtesy explained that there were empty chairs in front and invited them to come forward. How on this, those who had betted against Jenkinson at once declared that this was a speech and claimed their money; how in the midst of the consequent wrangle and hubbub the door opened, and Mr. Disraeli confronted his defeated party; finally, how, after his encouraging utterances, we all hurried away and at the foot of the staircase nearly knocked over the tall figure of a quiet,

military-looking old gentleman who was no less than the owner of the house.

On that day, or shortly after, I dined, as I seldom did, at the House. The party of members at the table was very characteristic. There was a tenant farmer who had turned out the representative of the chief land-owner in the county from his hereditary seat; there was his friend, myself, quite a small person, paddling my own canoe; and there was also the very clever and wealthy member for a Lancashire borough, who in his younger days had hacked out coal in a pit. As I did not like the potatoes, I complained to the waiter, saying they were bad: the "collier" did not agree with me; so to silence him, I said, "I know they are, for I grow potatoes." To this he replied, "Just so; but I have cooked them, and it's the cooking that's bad. When I made a home and married, the wife did the cooking, but when the children came, I had to look after the saucepan myself."

I had for another acquaintance in Parliament a very considerable colliery-owner and contractor, who had important engagements abroad. When the statue of Disraeli was unveiled, I was one of the crowd of public men who clustered round the figure, and Lord John Manners (now the Duke of Rutland), touching me on the shoulder, pointed with his finger to this bright-eyed, burly man and said, "There, *he* has more influence than any duke among us." He, not the duke, was the only man in the Carlton who then could drink his bottle of port. He began by saying, "Let us dine together, and I will give you a bottle of the best port in the club. I followed it by ordering a second; then I said, "I will toss you for the third," to

which his reply was invariably, "No, I have too much business to do."

Port wine is the only wine worth drinking for drinking's sake—not tawny stuff, not sweet or insipid, but real old (say thirty years), of a good vintage, not to be gulped down, but to be dwelt upon and held on the palate awhile before it is swallowed. Champagne is good, when one is fagged out. The first glass then is divine; a second may be allowed; the third is just guzzling. But after all, in my case there was no quicker or more effectual restorative than milk. The late Dr. Watson said to my mother that if a man could drink milk, his life was ten years better than that of another with whom it did not agree. I could go for a great many hours without food in the House of Commons, never touching anything between breakfast at ten at the Carlton and dinner there at half-past eight or nine. I hardly ever used a cab, and never wore a great-coat. In grouse shooting behind setters I carried nothing with me but a morsel of oatcake, and a modicum of old whiskey which I sipped undiluted. Anything more, I fancied, spoilt my shooting. When walking in Switzerland or over the lovely North-country fells and hills, I took an orange in my knapsack. This I rolled and pummelled till it was soft inside, then, making a small hole through the peel, I dropped in some best brandy and sucked it; then poured in more of the spirit and had another "taste," and so on till all the juice was gone. If the day was hot, I put my orange in a mountain spring to ice it, or in the snow, if there was any handy. In Switzerland and Italy I could generally add some fruit. Anything was better than meat or beer.

On the Scotch moors my pleasantest companion

was the late Lord Aberdare—a good shot and a splendid walker. Though I was not a slow goer, he would walk round me with ease. Gordon setters, the duke's gift to our host, were our dogs. On the ground we went over, twenty brace were considered a good day's sport, with a fair mixture of snipe ducks and now and then a curlew or golden plover. It was a treat at mid-day when we halted near a spring, and he would gladden me with his delightful anecdotes. One about the St. Kilda folk should not be lost. When he was Home Secretary, bitter dissension arose, even in that diminutive community, between Free Kirk and Established Kirk. As it concerned endowment, a petition was forwarded to the Government for a commissioner to be sent out to settle matters. When the suppliants heard that their request would be granted and a brig would land the commissioner, weather permitting, at the rock, a second petition promptly arrived, expressing gratitude and praying that as they were very short of women, the opportunity might be taken of sending eight, I think, was the number, with the commissioner. It was a sensible request, for owing to close intermarriages most of the infants died a few days after birth.

The island furnishes a good illustration of Darwin's law of natural selection, variation of structure, and survival of the fittest. The people's livelihood depends on the capture of the sea birds on the cliffs, which is done by climbing. If a young man cannot climb, neither can he marry; the test is the mastery of a particularly difficult and hazardous "stack," which at one spot can only be done by the climber placing his thumb in a small notch in the rock and by this hook alone raising his body sufficiently to bring his other limbs into play

to complete the ascent. I am told that this singular effort for generations has resulted in the hereditary development of a St. Kilda thumb of an unusually muscular character. When I first visited the Hebrides all the coin in St. Kilda amounted to but 4s. 9d., and the rent was paid in feathers and fulmar oil, conveyed once a year from the island in the collier which supplied the tenants with fuel.

When Lord Sherbrooke (then Mr. Lowe) was a guest at Dunvegan Castle, he was much put out by the delivery of letters being only at intervals of three days ; but as he was at the time Postmaster-General, he made speedy use of his authority to carry a wire from the mainland to the post-office at Kilmuir. Before long, this was carried on, under the sea, to Lochmaddy and the outer islands. Mr. Lowe used to declare that he could discern St. Kilda some 60 miles away from Skye, through the little eyelets in his "spoon" spectacles.

The drought in 1870 was excessive. It had been remarkable in 1868, but this year was hotter and drier. The grass did not furnish sufficient food for the live-stock, and we had to lop the trees for fodder. In 1868 Disraeli was posing as an agriculturist, and was to be seen, spud in hand, dressed in a velveteen lounge coat with long gaiters drawn over his trousers, side by side or arm in arm with my friend Mr. Jack Fowler, of Aylesbury, a noted agriculturist with considerable literary ability. Disraeli was playing up to this assumed character in his political speeches of that date delivered in Buckinghamshire. He dealt, of course, as all politicians love to do (though I do not think he loved it) on the homes and conditions of the agricultural labourer, insisting

that his felicity depended on his possessing a pig, a porch, and a third alliterative blessing which escapes my memory, and in generous and flamboyant terms he consoled the farmers in after-dinner speeches by reminding them that though the pastures were scorched up, they had "the nutritious and juicy turnip" to rely on. This was drawing too much on the imagination of his audience, as there was not a turnip in the kingdom the size of a walnut. But all this was excused, and though it was a surprise to the Carlton, he was duly returned for the county of Buckinghamshire.

I became acquainted with Mr. George Moore, the head of the house of Copestake, Moore & Crampton in Bow Churchyard. He was a great benefactor to many good causes, and he permitted me, as an East Londoner, to see him frequently and take counsel with him; and I had the *entrée* of his private business rooms in Cheapside, as well as a welcome to the mid-day meal (there in an upstairs room, which was laid out) for the country buyers, the members and managers of the firm, and there I met all classes of public men, political, clerical, philanthropical. When Moore had made up his mind to support any object he had at heart, he was not content with half measures, and made sure of its success by very large contributions of money, after having thoroughly satisfied himself of the amount needed. One day when I was with him he said, "I want you to dine with me in Palace Gardens next week. I have something in hand that will require a large fund to carry it through, and I am asking some friends whose assistance I can rely on and who are in a position to help. They know the object and its merits, so our conversation at dinner will not be taken up with explanation or solicitation." "Oh

dear!" I said, "Mr. Moore, I shall be entirely out of place there. I have very little money at disposal, and what I have is bespoken." He replied that he quite understood my case, that he expected nothing from me, but he would still like me to be one of the party. So on a brilliant summer evening I cut the House of Commons and went. I knew one or two of the guests, and I found the card for my seat was next his own on the left side. On his right was Mr. Coope, the rich brewer and member for Middlesex. After an excellent English dinner, without any loss of time, the wine was put on the table, and then Moore, taking a memorandum out of his pocket said, "I think you all know the reason of our coming together this evening, and I believe that all at the table feel as I do, that a strong endeavour will have to be made to attain what we desire. Now, Coope, I think I may put you down for £4,000." Mr. Coope emptied his glass of port and made no sign of dissent; but there was a slight tremor among the wine-glasses on the table, which I imputed to a convulsive movement in the lower limbs of the assembled philanthropists. Moore pencilled the amount on the memorandum, and passed on to the next, naming each man's subsidy and coming round guest by guest, till at last he reached me, when, to my great relief, he replaced the paper in his pocket. As the party was breaking up, Mr. Moore asked me to stay awhile with him. The evening was very warm, and we sat together for some time at an open window overlooking Kensington Gardens. We sat without candles. There was at first an evening glow all among the trunks of the old elms; then that died away and the twinkling lamps and the subdued rumble of distant traffic remained to remind us of the passing of another busy London day.

The quiet and rest were delightful, and as I thought of the vast energies of my friend and the noble life he was leading, I felt that it was a privilege to be in his presence.

In 1870 I satisfied myself, by study in the library of the House of Commons and by the valuable information and teaching given me by such experts as Mr. (afterwards Sir Henry) Longley and the other officials at the Local Government Board, that hideous mischief was being done by the ignorant administration of boards of guardians, to which I myself had for some years been a party. I thought I could do no better service to the State and to the poor than by turning to good account the opportunities a seat in Parliament gave me for calling the attention of the country at large, and my own union in particular, to what had become really a scandal. The subject was not one that Members of Parliament cared much to touch, but Mr. Goschen, then President of the Poor Law, or Local Government Board, understood the case, and lent his official authority to mend matters. Lord Lyttelton in the House of Lords supported reforming measures, and the aid of the present Lord Peel, then in the Commons, of Lord Frederick Cavendish, and of Lord Richard Grosvenor (now Lord Stalbridge), was to be relied on.

I made my first move in January, in the rural union of which I was a guardian, by calling attention to the great and continuous increase in the number of paupers during a period of extraordinary prosperity in all branches of industry. The colliers were reported to be quenching their thirst in champagne, while the farm labourer and shoe hand kept the tap of the ale-barrel in almost uninterrupted discharge in working hours, and what was left in the barrel ran out in the evening hours. I had

been a guardian of the poor from the age of twenty-one, and up to the age of forty had not read any instructional book whatever on the subject. I attended the fortnightly meetings of my colleagues at the Union board-room and got what I could for the applicants belonging to my parish. Our chairman's benevolence was only equalled by his ignorance of the first principles which (as I have since learned) should have guided him and us. All of a sudden I made the acquaintance of an ex-assistant Poor Law Commissioner,* who was now a considerable owner and occupier of land in a southern county. As I paid him frequent visits, I sometimes accompanied him to the meetings of the board of which he was chairman, and thus my eyes were opened and I began reading. It was like a new world to me, and I assimilated all the truths and instruction I gathered from the pages of Walker ("the Original"), Dr. Chalmers, Arthur Young, and above all the Reports of the great Poor Law Commission in the thirties.

As soon as I realised that the poor-rate was by law to be devoted to the relief of destitution and not the alleviation of poverty, I began an examination into the parish cases, with the most surprising results. Here benevolence had made full use of public funds, justifying the custom under the plea of Christian duty to neighbours. The good Samaritan appeared among us in the form of the relieving officer, and his dole of loaves was supplemented by such extras of meat and brandy or wine as the parish doctor recommended. Before long I came to the conclusion that, in our own village and parish at least, trial should be made of the workhouse test. It was obvious that rent could not be

* Mr. Stevens, of Bradfield.

paid and a life of idleness sustained on the parish dole. It was clearly our duty to ascertain whence and what were the other sources of income.

I set about the inquiry, beginning with the case of a "very respectable and deserving" widow with several young children. As she was the widow of our rector's regular coachman, who had died suddenly, and as she was a communicant, I took the rector into my confidence. He was much distressed at my suggestion of a formal official inquiry and at the suggestion of an offer of indoor relief, assuring me that the poor woman had no private means or substance beyond what the offertory and his purse bestowed. He played the advocate's part so well that, with my then entire want of experience, he diverted me from my purpose, and matters went on as before, only I took her younger boy on to the farm and garden, stone-picking and bird-scaring, at, I fear, very sorry pay. I can see the innocent little fellow now on a cold morning in a scanty green great-coat made out of his father's old livery, with a basket in one hand, blowing on the other which was at liberty, as he stooped intermittently to pick up a cold flint, or taking silent refuge under a bank from the March wind, while the crows in hundreds were billing and digging at the sprouting barley; and then the feeble run forward and scream of alarm as his wandering eyes fell on my figure at the field gate. Poor little chap!—a touching example of the mercies of outdoor relief and the blunted conscience of the guardian who procured it for him.*

* This family, Mr. Pell means to suggest, were sacrificed to the irresistible temptation which an unwise administration of Poor Law relief sets before the poor, either, as in this case, to simulate destitution, or, what is much worse and more general, to neglect all reasonable precaution and so really achieve destitution.

The eldest of the family "kept house," a good girl, but not more than a girl, maybe of fourteen years. Before a year had gone by, the mother died, and was buried at the cost of the ratepayers ; and as soon as the grave was turfed over, this girl called with a request to see me. She was sufficiently draped in black, so were the other orphans. When she came into the room, I put a chair for her, and asked her what she wanted. She desired, she said, to know what she should do about mother's money. As I supposed this meant about a few shillings, perhaps only pence, I said she need not make a fuss about it, if the relieving officer questioned her, as it was not worth considering. "But indeed it is," was her excited reply ; "it is sixty pounds, and Mr. —— [the rector] took care of it for mother." Here was a pretty revelation, the precursor of many of the same description that I unravelled as years went on. I lost no time in walking off to the rectory for an interview and explanation. My friend told me the child's account was accurate, and the money all safe, I think in the savings bank, in the mother's name. When I remonstrated with him on the concealment he had been a party to, he rather indignantly reproved my want of feeling for the poor and needy, and pointed out that it was his duty, as "clergyman of the parish," to protect those unfortunates, and that confidences should not be betrayed. As the child had dropped some remarks about "mother's other money," much as I disliked any further conversation on the matter, still, I ventured to ask if he could throw any light on these remarks. After some hesitation he told me that he believed (in fact, he knew very well) that a sister, a farmer, had been a borrower of the pauper, but he did not state

what was the amount. From the daughter, however, I learnt the name and address of her aunt, and she brought me memoranda which seemed to me to show that a sum of over £300, and interest, was involved. Acting as trustee for the children, I employed a solicitor to take the matter in hand, and was fortunate enough to recover and invest over £300. I soon found employment for the two eldest, and the £300 saw the whole family fairly started in life.

The next case in the same village was that of a bed-ridden woman (a pauper), living in a miserable hut of only one room, the wall of which was made of cobble or red earth. In the thickness of this wall a recess had been left or cut out for a sleeping-place, and within this recess, for I know not how long, this woman, a fragile creature, had passed her life, engaged with her needle, when there was light enough, in doing "sprig-work" on Nottingham net, stretched out on a light wooden frame. The pay, supplemented by the Poor Law dole, was starvation pay. Taking into consideration the character of the house, the woman's health, the miserable industry to which her time was devoted, I made up my mind to persuade my fellow-guardians to withhold outdoor relief, and make an offer of the "house." The parish doctor had doubts about the risk of moving to fresh surroundings a woman who had been so long bed-ridden. She herself assured me it would be her death. The neighbours in the adjoining mud residences were clamorous and threatening. The features of the case, however, were scandalous, and if made public would certainly have led to well-deserved condemnation of the neglect of the guardians. Among those specially active in discouraging removal to the workhouse was a young

man, a sawyer, earning very good wages. He lodged a few doors off, and was constantly vociferating "Shame!" when the determination of the guardians to act on their decision became known. A fortnight or a month's grace was allowed before relief was stopped. By the expiration of that time the bed-ridden pauper was out of her bed, the sprig-work was gone to the devil, its fitting destination, her faith in the guardians' treatment had made her whole, and she took herself off to London, having hastily married the sawyer, where, in Lambeth, he made a comfortable home and got regular employment, and where she became the mother of three children. Her eldest, a boy, for several years used to write me notes, with his mother's dutiful respects, telling me what good times they were all having.

Since 1865 the charge for Poor Law relief was no longer parochially localised, but the idea still prevailed that as regards out-door relief each parish might be trusted to look after its own affairs. The result of the old parochial chargeability had been very cruel to the resident poor, who were expelled from the close parishes and crowded into the open ones. Still, in these close and over-crowded parishes the farmers regarded it as some compensation that they had the command of an ample supply of labour on the spot at the busiest seasons of the year. The contrast between the rude hovels as homes in the open villages, and the ostentatiously roomy and ornamental cottages in the close ones, with their gardens and out-houses, was very marked. The providers of these model cottages were spoken of as examples of generous and estimable landlords in the press and in pamphlets by writers ignorant of the miserable system of which they formed a picturesque part,

and of the fact that the last thing their owners desired was that any more of the busy and needful men, working on their estates, should with their wives and little ones be housed there. Such had been the bane of the English Poor Law on the point of settlement.

The low and inadequate rents at which model residences were let, with the approbation of the benevolent, was another source of ill-being to the rural labourer; it checked the independent building of other houses in the neighbourhood of a substantial and suitable character by depressing the scale of rents to a degree that made cottage building wholly unremunerative, and led to the people being housed in sorry, cramped shanties, on little plots cribbed from the roadsides, or in narrow rows, brick and slate of the meanest description, the speculation of the jerry-builder. Still, there was one abounding charm about them—they were the homes of independence. While the rent was paid, politics, Nonconformity, lack of submission, amusements, habits of life, did not furnish disqualifications for tenancy, and the tenants remained undisturbed at the fireside, unless removed by the process of law.

Sanitary laws were not in the Statute Book; the need of them was not felt, and when fever came it was regarded as God's will being done. In my village typhoid appeared and killed at considerable intervals of time, in one or two houses, not by any means sorry ones, and it has only been within the last thirty years, that attention has been turned to finding out the cause. In these poor homes, however, nothing to me was more striking in many cases than the skill, care, and ingenuity shown in house-keeping, especially in the sick-room, which, however poorly furnished, was

clean and made as comfortable as poor circumstances would allow. The contrast between the surroundings of the sick person in a poor London district and here was very remarkable—there was so much more “ management ” and so much less money in the country than in the town home, and so many more appliances for comfort and economy. As Miss Octavia Hill has pointed out, in many of the homes of the London poor it would be possible to seek in vain for a thimble, a darning needle, a cradle, a clock, a pair of scissors. In the country this is not so. There in old days the mother’s dress, of real stout stuff, as it wore out and after much patching, descended to child after child, till nothing but a rag remained ; and so with the father’s clothes—cut up, reduced, re-fashioned, and re-made, they passed down the family of boys, to figure at last, though in tatters, still with some stoutness, as a “ mawkin ” in the corn-field. There extremes met, and the stake that upheld them was topped with the squire’s oldest stove-pipe hat. This headgear, stirred by the March gusts, seemed gifted with some feudal authority, always terrifying to the rooks who sailed, cawing vehemently, round it, the very birds who would alight with distressing familiarity in the shadow of a mawkin, surmounted only by a straw bonnet.

The union in which I acted as a guardian might be termed a rural one in 1870. I do not remember a factory at that time in it ; each village, except the smallest, had a shoemaker or cobbler, a hedge carpenter, a baker, a publican, a tailor, possibly a butcher, and many skilled labourers, clever thatchers, hedge-cutters, and drainers, of whom it might be said that most of them took a pride in their work. It contained over 63,000 acres with a

population of nearly 14,000. There were several very considerable estates in it, with their "close" villages, and there were the mansions of four peers of the realm on those estates, and in addition there were some smaller but still large properties with their halls standing on them. As far as nature had to do with it, I should say it was a goodly district. In the year 1870 everything went on in the usual "humdrum" way, though in the town and manufacturing districts there was an extraordinary "boom." At all events, elsewhere work was abundant, and wages on the whole good, but in my peaceful, aristocratic union, if you paraded all the inhabitants—peers, parsons, squires, yeomen, farmers, gentlemen at large, and the residue, big and little—one out of every twelve in the assemblage was a pauper. The first thing to be done was to get these figures officially vouched, and at the same time to make a personal call at the home of every pauper and obtain particulars at first hand from the mouth of each recipient of parish relief. At the same time a committee of the guardians took on themselves the revision of the lists. The consequent revelations were what might be expected, and reform set in at once. Of course, no advance could easily be made with the old chairman in office. He disappeared, and was succeeded by one * who proved as able and as reasonable as any that ever filled that most important office.

In the "close" villages were the usual ornamental cottages, which the pleased observer saw and praised. What he did not see was that which I discovered and witnessed in my round of inquiry. On January 22, knocking at the door of W—— B—— at C—— B—— and

* The Rev. William Bury, rector of Hazelbeeche and later of Harlestone, Northamptonshire.

entering the cottage, an extremely good one, I found the tenant W—— B—— blind, and seated by the cold fireplace. He said, "I am seventy-five years old, and blind. I worked for sixty-five years on the same farm—the Rectory Farm in this parish; about four years ago I took a prize for long service, £4. I have been on the rates twelve months. I and my wife had 5s. a week to live on from the relieving officer. Now we have 6s. Last winter was very cold. For nineteen weeks we never touched meat [meaning "butcher's meat"]. For several days we had no firing except a few sticks we picked up. We went to bed many days at four o'clock to keep warm. The guardian never comes to see us. I don't even know who he is. Our rent is £4 a year—£2 half-yearly. I don't know how we shall meet next pay-day. My wife is now upstairs in bed; she is not well. We have had fifteen children. None of them can help us now. Three sons and three daughters are living, all with families, and one single son, I don't know where." H—— S——, in the same village, told me: "I have been for six years a widow, and have lived in this house forty-eight years. My rent is £3 6s. 8d. My husband worked for twenty-seven years on one farm. I am obliged to have a nurse now at 1s. 6d. a week. My children do a little for me. One, a girl, is single, thirty-three years old, and lives with Mr. ——, of the Board of Trade. The guardian doesn't visit me. I was eight years needle-woman at —— Park, and made the first clothes the present earl wore, I mean my landlord." Again, in the same village I called on S—— S——, who told me: "I am twenty years a widow. Don't know who the guardian is. Nobody visits me except Lady X—— at Christmas time. My husband used to work

regularly for the last ten years of his life at —— House gardens.”

Now, all these cases were in a “close” parish owned by a man of the highest possible character, resident on this estate, perfectly ready to do his duty by the poor if he *only knew it*.* He proved a ready and conscientious learner, and played his part handsomely in the coming reform. On this same property was a row of picturesque cottages put up at much cost with an eye to effect. Each of them had for a tenant a widow at a nominal rent. There was no endowment whatever; all the inmates were paupers, at the annual charge on the rates of over £60 a year for maintenance alone.

About this time I visited annually the West of England. I had a friend there, one of the largest land-owners in the country. Near his house, and approached by a lovely lane in a warm hollow some way up the side of a hill, was a picturesque settlement of little chalets standing round a green, kept in the best order by the scythe—a show place. My friend was very proud of this family appanage. He took me to see it, and what we saw had indeed a pretty effect; but what he did not see, or, for all that, most of his admiring neighbours and visitors did not see, I soon discovered. Every inmate was a pauper. Oh, the degradation of such a display!—and this, too, in the cause of “charity”! In these

* The suggestion of course is that if proprietors instead of spending money on model almshouses, and allowing them to be tenanted by persons in receipt of relief, would take an interest in procuring a more restricted administration of the Poor Law, they would do a greater kindness to the poor and maintain the population in an honourable and progressively increasing independence.

close parishes, why should there be any paupers at all, occupying houses, too, wanted for the homes of the independent labourers on the estate? Why were these tabooed and driven to reside at a distance from their employment in the sorry hovels of the "open" parishes?

Meeting Mr. Gladstone one evening at a quiet dinner in London, he began a conversation with me on the subject of Poverty in the East of London. I advised him, if he ever had time to spare, to drive with Mrs. Gladstone down Whitechapel High Street and the Commercial Road, at about eight in the evening, assuring him that he would look upon a scene of activity and cheerfulness far beyond anything to be seen in Pall Mall, and that there were fewer sad faces in the East to trouble him than in the West. We soon got on the general question of pauperism, and he sat and listened as if I was a Gamaliel—not, however, encouraging any argument; but he asked me what I thought of the influence of the clergy in the midst of this difficulty. I replied that with one or two exceptions (which I would have named, only he at once became restless), in my opinion, they aggravated the evil and assisted in the manufacture of paupers, whose numbers I had come to feel depended not so much on straitened circumstances and limited opportunities as on the will or want of will of those in a position to guide and govern them as neighbours, employers, or landlords. Becoming adventurous, I went on to say that, as pheasants were preserved at Hawarden, and as it was possible to arrange how many birds should be on the ground there, I was convinced that the same care would settle the point how many paupers should be on the estate, one hundred or none at all. He neither assented nor questioned this

proposition.* Mr. Gladstone, however, deserved our thanks for the ministers he placed at the head of the Poor Law Board in Whitehall. With Mr. (now Lord) Goschen

* The following letter, written at the time, gives a fuller and equally humorous account of this interview :

CARLTON CLUB, PALE MALL, S.W.

May 3, 1883.

MY DEAR JOHN,—

An event has just happened in my political meanderings through life which will, I know, interest you.

I have dined with Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, not at their house, but as quietly and exclusively at that of a mutual friend, Sir Walter James, in Whitehall Gardens. I went impromptu, "just as I was," from the House of Commons (so did Gladstone) at 8 on Monday, at the conclusion of Lord Randolph Churchill's speech. Lady James is a delightful old lady with all the cheerfulness and spring of youth, which remains only with old ladies of her period, who, by the way, are never stout. She is a great personal friend of the Gladstones. Mr. Gladstone sat on her right, I on her left hand, at the round table, at which also were of course old Sir Walter James, his son the M.P. for Gateshead, his wife, and Mrs. Gladstone (who, I consider, comes far behind Miss Octavia Hill).

Mr. Gladstone eat his dinner methodically, and *completely cleared his plate!* There were no remnants! (Oh, John!) He drank only claret; his shirt was about as old as mine with similar buttons, bought, I should think, at the village shop. His laundress is not a Chinaman or French. When his mouth was not full (and I allowed him the chance), he talked earnestly or listened attentively. I asked him whether he left the House while Lord Randolph was speaking on account of a false quantity (Origen). He said, "By no means. Macaulay always pronounced it Origen." I asked him what quantity he himself would use, and he said he was much in doubt. Then he went off to ecclesiastical history and Mosheim, and said it could never be well written by itself; that could only be done by weaving it into a general history of a period or of a people, and that it had yet to be written. He spoke a good deal about Henry VIII.'s divorce, saying it had very much less to do with the Reformation in England than was generally understood. Then something led up to London, and he took up the blocks in the streets and pointed out where new ones were becoming frequent and that the alteration at Hyde Park Corner would not remedy the difficulty there, which required a subway. No large town in Europe would tolerate what takes place at Charing Cross.

or with Mr. Stansfield in control, the principles of the Poor Law were safe from official trifling, such as was to follow in a few years at the hands of the Conservatives.

I saw a good deal, and was a close observer, at this time, of that vivacious politician Lord Randolph Churchill. He sat always with the "Fourth Party" exactly below me, and astonished me by his eagerness and excitement. I could only compare the quivering of the muscles of his neck while speaking to that in the neck of a fox-terrier intent on the seizure of a rabbit in his burrow. The

A great concourse of people and vehicles are drawn together at that point, half of whom have to cross the river, and *the* bridge is wanting, so they pass, some to the right, some to the left, to block two streets that most need freedom—Parliament Street and the Strand. Next he talked of street architecture—work in red bricks, which he said had been best done, he thought, in some buildings at the bottom of Norfolk Street, next Somerset House, and how the present Duke of Westminster had intercepted his father's building projects which would have disfigured West London. Then he began with me about East London. When Lady James introduced me, he had said, "Oh! I know all about you and your connection with East London, and some of your views." I told him I thought there was not much to be said for our architecture, but I thought he would be interested to see the Whitechapel Road at night, and that he would form a very good opinion of the people, of their industry, submission to order, and cheerfulness; then he all at once became like Paul at the feet of Gamaliel, and he had to listen to a few verses from the Epistle of St. George the Crowder and St. Pell the Less: the Epistle General to the Guardians of the Poor. But oh! the immeasurable distance between Gladstone and ———! neither inclining to the workhouse test, but the former, eager to learn, insisting on a statement of results, even to the very numbers in our workhouse and infirmary last week, admitting that the supply of labour to the docks and riverside factories would be better regulated under our system, that play would be given to active charitable relations between the poor themselves, and that the sense of responsibility among employers and the "well-to-do" would probably be thus revived; the other—spellbound in his own ignorant presumption. He asked me whether on these subjects I thought the clergy held right views, and whether their presence was serviceable among the poor. You know what sort of a reply I would

quiverings became more intense as his words poured out, especially if Mr. Gladstone, sitting over the way, was the object of his assault. Mr. A. J. Balfour frequently sat next him as one of the same party. His deportment and posture were very different. It reminded me of the figures of saints in abbey windows. It was one rather of blessing than of cursing. There seemed to be about it all an air of affectation. When he spoke, however, his words claimed attention and respect at once. The other members of the "Fourth Party" immediately below me were Henry

give. I mentioned Samuel Barnett of Whitechapel as an exception, and incidentally he declaimed against Navy chaplains as unfitted for parish duties. He said he had never sailed but once in a man-of-war, and perhaps formed his opinion too much from one example. I thought I knew of another, but held my peace. Then, as Mrs. Gladstone had been to the London Hospital that day (I wish she would keep away), he took up the subject of the great hospitals. *I hit them as hard as I knew how*, and he entered into the subject with as much spirit as if it was that of the Irish Land Laws. I told him I hoped he did not think I was a philanthropist, for I could assure him if I had not other calls in East London I should probably never have gone near the place. He said he thought he understood what I meant, and that it would be as well if others in my station in life became owners of property in the poor quarters of the town. At last, but not till we had been over half an hour together in the drawing-room, he took his departure, alone; and then in an hour's time he was sitting opposite to me again in the House, with his legs stretched before him, protruding the low, lattice-tied shoes, the well-worn black morning suit, the old shirt and buttons, the necktie with the bow twisted under the left ear, the hands folded on the lap, the eyes closed, and the lines of the face drawn into a deep expression of patient waiting for the great division that will take place to-night. I need not say what a pleasure it has been for once to have met this strange being and to have talked face to face with him, and I thought you might share some of this pleasure if I tried to give you a little sketch of the quiet evening with Gladstone.

Believe me,

Yours affectionately,

ALBERT PELL.

If you don't mind letting me have the letter again, I can put it in my diary, and thus save much writing there.

Chaplin, John Gorst, and, best of all, Jim Lowther. He was a fine friend to have at hand in a political scuffle. We were at daggers drawn, however, over Protection, but I admired him much as a fearless, outspoken, and most honest politician. With him I must mention Tom Collins, member for Boston, who possessed the voice of a costermonger, the cotton umbrella of Mrs. Gamp always, wet or dry, under his arm, and who shared with Mr. Beresford Hope, of "Batavian grace," the same indifference to dress and a devotion to High Church dogmas. From Tom Collins I learnt the art of obstruction, for the exercise of which the orders of the House then gave full play. We were considered adepts; but when Cork sent Mr. Biggar among us, we retired among the reserves. As summer came on, I enjoyed the late hours when the game in the House was left to be played out by a select reserve on both sides. A patient and determined obstructionist on the other side was one of the oldest men in the House, a tall, hearty, North-country Whig, with a fluffy white hat, of course, and a splendid constitution. He was, I think too, a great fox hunter. Like myself, he always walked home from the House, and I enjoyed this with him beyond measure. As we trudged up Whitehall at three or four in the morning, if it was fine, he always pulled up somewhere near the Horse Guards, and, turning his fine rugged face to the East, called on me to admire the view with the rising sun shining on St. Paul's. Certainly it was then one of the very many beautiful views London affords. No need to go to Venice for effects.

CHAPTER XII

SOME HUMOURS OF PARLIAMENT

THE year 1870 was an eventful one for the country, which suffered from a drought commencing at the end of February and lasting till the end of August. The ponds were baked dry, the wells were empty, cattle had to be driven long distances to drink, or water was carted for them, as a friend farming in Norfolk told me, seven miles by road. We lopped the ash and other trees for fodder, and turned the animals into woods and plantations to get what browsing they could. Poor things! they were bags of bones to look at. The cart-horses had to live in the stables or yards. I bought "natural molasses," a sugar refuse, from the West Indies in large hogsheads. It had to be dug out of them with a spade and afterwards with much trouble dissolved in water. With this a large heap of wheat or other straw was soaked and then given to the famished animals.

In Parliament were stirring events; Gladstone supreme. On February 15 he introduced his Irish Land Bill in a speech of three hours, containing a provision and machinery to fix "official rent," an early inoperative meddling with free contract. This was followed on February 17 by the Education Bill, in charge of William Edward Forster. He did it very well in his rough, acute way. His work was always that of the axe, rather than of the plane, but

he fashioned his material very suitably with it. These two measures roused the Conservatives to action, which resulted in an imposing meeting of the party at Lord Lonsdale's house in Carlton Terrace, of which I have already made mention—a great relief from Parliamentary dullness, a relief improved on April 5 by my first sight of Sothern as Lord Dundreary, and on the 6th by the Oxford and Cambridge boat-race on the Thames, of which I had a fine view from the oil-mills of Messrs. Pinchin & Johnson, East London neighbours. Radical efforts did not yet subside, for on May 9 Lord Hartington brought in the Ballot Bill in the most Radical speech I had ever listened to. On July 14 the Victoria Embankment was opened, and on July 17, going down to the House, I heard that war was announced between France and Prussia. This made up a remarkable record for six months of one year.

I soon found that, in addition to such grave matters, the House of Commons was constantly occupied with the discussion of “nostrums”—such, for instance, as Warner's Long Range, the Dover and Calais Tunnel, the repeal of the malt tax, rating highlands for the prevention of floods in the valleys, a broad gauge for railway track, and “Home Rule,” the last named a nostrum fatal to the existence of the party led by the statesman who adopted it. But of all the “nostrum” makers, the most fertile was another statesman of the same party. It is amusing now to remember the eager and reckless way in which Mr. Joseph Chamberlain has projected his nostrum-like bombs during his Parliamentary career, and the readiness with which they have been accepted by persons reckless of constitutional safeguards and legal or hereditary rights. The first of these was a declaration

of the questionable title to the possession of land by the great owners. Justice could only be satisfied by the exaction of "ransom"—so said the Birmingham oracle. So, for a short while, shouted his disciples; and then he dropped it for a new nostrum and prescription for the House of Lords. It was announced that the House of Lords must be either "mended or ended"—a pretty phrase, but, as no tinker equal to the mending and no madcap with zeal sufficient for the ending have yet appeared, that nostrum (No. 2) was dropped. Then, leaving the "classes," he turned to the "masses," and, with Mr. Jesse Collins as the inventor, he adopted him and nostrum No. 3 in the "three acres and a cow." Then for a while there was a lull, and the curtain dropped over this pretty rural folly. But the fertile brain was not idle, and philanthropy was the drug relied on for compounding the next nostrum, No. 4. The idea of State-aided or rate-aided pensions for the aged poor was adopted and received all the support that an extraordinary gift of speech and ability could command. This nostrum was referred to a Royal Commission and to several committees of inquiry, and has been condemned or declared impracticable by all.* What was to be done to alleviate this disappointment? Not in the least dismayed or corrected, Mr. Chamberlain revived the ghost of Protection and adopted that as nostrum No. 5. Its embers were still smouldering in Conservative homes, and he fanned them into flames. But the flame will not

* It was without doubt Mr. Chamberlain's intervention which brought the old-age pension question within the range of practical politics; but, singularly enough, the only plan which holds the field is Mr. Charles Booth's scheme of universal gratuitous pensions—a scheme which Mr. Chamberlain has always consistently condemned. It is a modern instance of Frankenstein's monster.

endure, for there is no substantial supply of fuel to feed it, and, what is worse for the devotees, the stars in their courses are against them. This nostrum, nevertheless, just as Home Rule had done, smashed the party which entertained it, the party of which Mr. Balfour was the leader.

The dull, prosy debates to which I had to listen were now and then relieved by unlooked-for flashes of wit from unexpected quarters. There was a member for Northampton, Mr. Gilpin, who in due time sat on the Liberal front bench. When he entered the house, he was regarded by that august assembly as hardly up to the mark in birth, education, manners, or appearance. He was "sniffed at." When for the first time he stood up to address the House, his attempt was met with indignant and jeering utterances, expressive of derision and contempt. He was silent for half a minute, then raising his voice to its highest and turning round towards the Speaker, he exclaimed, "Sir, I cannot be put down in this way, for I have been accustomed to address a worse set of blackguards than those who are now trying to shout me down." This silenced the noisy crew, who were glad to have done with him and leave him to make his speech without interruption.

In the debate on the Ballot Bill the English county members had been particularly ready to impart to the House their electioneering experiences as candidates. Such relations were neither novel, exciting, nor amusing till Mr. Bernal Osborne, with his smooth, sallow face, "caught the Speaker's eye," and declared that there was nothing remarkable in any English election that he ever heard of, and that an Irish election was the thing. "There," he said, "a candidate started in the morning in a chaise and four and came home in the

evening on a hurdle." Mr. Bernal Osborne had a very varied electioneering experience, for it was said that he never was returned for the same constituency twice. On one occasion he thought to practise his sarcastic wit at the expense of Mr. Ayrton, who had recently joined the Liberal Government. Mr. Ayrton was certainly not a jocosé man, and he sat impassive and still during the attack; he then rose very deliberately and said, "Mr. Speaker, the honourable member for——" then hesitated and added in a whisper loud enough to reach me, "Where the devil does he sit for now?"

Mr. Ayrton was an able man, but without much polish. While at the Office of Works he did excellent service at Hampton Court and in the park, by introducing a better display and arrangement of flowers under the advice of a Scotch expert, who was summoned to his aid from the North. I have always thought him deserving of the gratitude of his countrymen for the beautiful adornment of our parks and public places. Somehow or another, the management of affairs at Kew Gardens gave him offence and roused his bad temper, so much so that in a technical debate in the House of Commons, when stress was laid on the experience and scientific attainments of Sir Joseph Hooker, the Director of Kew Gardens, Mr. Ayrton growled out that he was not in a position to carry on a contest with a "market gardener."

This year I had to attend the Church Congress at Nottingham, staying for it at the house of a relation in that county. An admirable paper was read by Professor Westcott on University Education for the Ministry of the Church. There I met again an old schoolfellow, Dr. Charles Vaughan, subsequently Master of the Temple

and Dean of Llandaff. I had kept up a friendship with him for many years. After leaving Rugby I lost sight of him till I was in rooms at Trinity *in statu pupillari*; he came up to keep Divinity terms. He had been reading for the Bar, but on the death of his uncle, Judge Vaughan, he left that pursuit in exchange for the Church. Unfortunately for him, he was given rooms over mine in New Court, and, as I was not a reading man, but an idle one with noisy companions carrying on our carousals through the night, with frequent convivial outbursts in the daytime, he was in great straits for opportunities of quiet study. At last I got a nice note sent down from above me: "MY DEAR PELL,—If you will only tell me when you go to bed, if you ever do, I will avail myself of such periods for study and reading."

In October I acceded to a request to lay the foundation-stone of a village school, built by a clerical Tory constituent. Being a freemason, it was fit I should do so. The day was fine, and the company very cordial, joining in some prayers on the spot. Then the ivory-handled trowel was handed to me, which I took in workmanlike style and, spitting on my hand, was about to do a little smoothing of the stone with its edge, when the mason seized my wrist and, saying, "It is silver," saved it from mutilation.

In December I gave up one of the four or five different farms I occupied in three counties, reserving the proceeds of the sale for election expenses, being well assured that my wealthy opponent would punish my pocket as often as the opportunity occurred.

At the end of this year the Prince of Wales had a very dangerous attack of illness, and his life at one time was despaired of. I was, like thousands of others,

terribly anxious, and went daily to hear how he fared from a great lady of the Court. At last the tidings improved, and one day I was told he had actually drunk some beer. I clapped my hands and pronounced him safe. I had walked across country in a black fog, but I returned with something better than a bright sun to warm and cheer me, and the New Year of 1872 "came up to take his own" undimmed by mourning.

February 27 was a sunny spring day, and I walked with my wife before a quarter past ten to the House of Commons. Thence, with other members and their wives, we went in a steamboat from the House of Commons' stairs to St. Paul's Wharf, from which we walked up through narrow ways, cleared of people, to the Cathedral. The Queen came in state with the Prince and Princess of Wales and others of the Royal Family, and we were in our places, excellent ones, near her station awaiting her arrival. The service began exactly at one o'clock, and was marked by great solemnity and devotion, being only interrupted on my right by the snoring of some of the Diplomatic Corps during the sermon. There was no crush or difficulty in returning to the boat. I at once made my way with my wife to Constitution Hill, where the mob seemed to have some doubt as to which was the Queen, but the cheering was general and decided when they became sure of their object. I was out again from nine to twelve at night in the streets, visiting Ludgate Hill, Holborn Viaduct, Holborn Bars, Temple Bar, the Strand, New and Old Oxford Streets, Regent Street, Piccadilly, and Pall Mall, and did not meet with one reeling drunkard or twenty the worse for liquor. The charge-lists at the police courts next day were a proof of the temperance of the

crowds on this occasion. I heard no bad language, and saw no blow struck. The coloured fire at St. Paul's had a good effect, the lamps round the dome a very poor one.

On a fine day in March I took a long walk to revisit the home of my childhood on the northern margin of Middlesex. I knew the daffodils would be found in flower under the trees in the big pasture field near the hedge dividing it from Hertfordshire and in the open spaces of the wood over the fence. There they were, dancing in the wind, and I sat down to gaze at them. The eagerness of childhood to gather them, with all the satisfaction of so choice a prize, no longer possessed me. The sister who used to join in the visit to their ground was dead; the field had been parted with: it and the daffodils had another owner, a stranger, and I had another home, with no daffodils, wild, at least; and I returned to my London work and the formal hyacinths in the parks. There was a great gulf fixed between the daffodils and the hyacinths.

The principal matter to which I devoted myself in Parliament was the relief of real property from the undue charges of local taxation. I had been at it ever since 1869, and to my great satisfaction, Sir Massey Lopes, my leader, defeated Mr. Gladstone's Government in a pitched battle over the question by a hundred votes.

In May, instead of a tramp at the Lakes, I and my wife went off to Yorkshire, sleeping on the way at Leeds. The next day we put on the knapsacks, took train for Skipton, and thence went on foot to Bolton Abbey, Barden Tower, and to Barnsall to sleep. The next day, a very cold one, we walked over the hills by Linton and

Threshfield to near Malham Water ; then turned back to Gordale Scaur, on by Malham to Malham Cove, and back to the Buck Inn at Malham to sleep. No daffodils anywhere, but in their place the beautiful flowers of the *primula farinosa* on the hills.

The next day we drove to Bellbusk station, and so on by train to Ingleton, whence we walked to Batty-Wife's-Hole, a strange settlement of navvies engaged in the construction of the new Midland line to Carlisle. They were at work on a great viaduct and tunnel, and quite a little wooden town of bothies, huts, and shops had been got together by the roadside in the valley. There were hard-featured women, with unruly children, engaged in washing and hanging out clothes of all descriptions to dry ; there was no gossiping or dawdling ; they had neither waists nor manners. The " stores " supplied all the family wants—flannel, boots, bonnets, buttons (large ones), round jackets, thick and warm, fustian trousers, bright cotton neck-cloths, cards, cribbage boards, song-books, even some musical instruments. There was a " public " with ale and tobacco, where large, coarse, glass flasks, flat to button into a jacket's breast-pocket, holding about a pint of spirits, were in steady demand. Large drays loaded with the strongest ale and stout were unloading in the road, or returning with empty barrels to the distant brewery. There was no butcher's shop, such as is seen in the streets, but instead a well-arranged slaughter-house, where the best beef and mutton was killed, and where I saw in the evening the men, not the women, come in to buy, taking away only the best joints. There was a window where children's wooden sand-spades were sold, and kites and hoops and German toys, the like of

which might be seen at any seaside watering-place. There was no sand, however, here for a child to dig—all was rock and glacier clay, which, when wet, melted down into “slurry” and became the most troublesome stuff for the contractors to meddle with in the railway cuttings. Occasionally it slipped, spued and slithered into a cutting, and in the night would overwhelm a train of trucks placed for its removal in a solid form next day. The engineers of the London and North-Western line for years were occupied with resisting its descent on to the track near Bletchley station as it is approached from the north, and the Midland Company had similar difficulties and dangers at the south approach to the Ampthill tunnel. That evening we walked into Gearstones Inn to sleep.

The next day was very wet and miserably cold, a typical May day, but we reached Leyburn. We put up at a small commercial inn there. We proposed going to church, but the landlord said it would be better not, for the rector did not like strangers at the service. This decided the matter, and we found our way into a dull pew near the reading-desk. There were no signs of a congregation, except some boys, who in a few minutes began to take shots at our heads with nuts, which rattled off the oak panelling in a lively way. This ceased, however, with the arrival of the rector, who frowned at us on his way to the reading-desk. Then his wife walked up to a bird-organ; a hymn was given out, a few feeble notes followed; and then came forth from the nut boys a volume of the most lovely sound, and the hymn might have been sung by seraphs. This was a Sunday to remember!

On Monday, which was fine and warm, we made for

Middleham Castle, near which we were startled by runners crying, "Card of the races, gents!—card of the races, weights and colours of the riders!" and we realised that we were entering a famous Yorkshire training-ground, a strange contrast to the quiet of the moors and rocks we had come away from; but there was the castle to be seen, and the lovely Jervaulx Abbey at its best in a warm, bright spring day. Then we walked back to Ure Bridge, and so to Richmond for the night.

The next and last day of the expedition we took the train to Ripon, and in the evening walked to the splendid ruins of Fountains Abbey, surrounded with exquisite scenery. What a holiday week this had been, beginning with wild moorland scenery, and closing among examples of the most perfect art, ruins now, but putting to shame modern efforts of pious Protestants!

On the 29th I went to the consecration of St. Benet's Church, Stepney—not a bad building, and the first example of the removal (nominally, at all events) of a superfluous City benefice to the far East, with its growing crowds of industrious and poor people. The first incumbent was a friend whose acquaintance I had made some years before in his first cure of souls near the London Docks. His history was an interesting one. He was the son of a draper (I believe) at Lancaster, and got his teaching at the free school in that town, as I fancy had Mr. George Moore, of the famous wholesale house in Bow Churchyard. Mr. Moore had himself as a young man found his way to London, obtained employment there in a leading draper's establishment, and step by step had raised himself to the place of a leading citizen in London and one of her foremost public men and

philanthropists. So my friend, himself still only a full-grown lad, reached Cheapside, and finding his way into the busy offices, asked to see Mr. Moore, sending in word that he was a Lancaster lad. He was admitted to an audience, and in reply to the usual question of "what he wanted," replied, "Employment in Mr. Moore's service." One of the partners came in, to whom the case was mentioned. I fancy Mr. Moore must have been touched by the appeal and inclined to give way, when Mr. Copestake put in, "We don't want boys here; we may want men." This roused my friend's spirit and temper, and he at once retorted, "Give me a trial, and if I don't sell as much as any man on the premises, get rid of me." So he was taken on.

Now, the wholesale house of Copestake, Moore & Crampton then dealt in every article required for women's dress, and to them came up from the country towns the drapers, large and small, for their supplies. Many, of course, were in a small way of business, but they required a long list of goods for their retail customers. To complete his order, a purchaser had to be passed from room to room to select in each one the special article stored in it; this took time, and was wearying work when the orders were so small. My friend at once saw the trouble, and asked for a supply of large cases or boxes with shelves to lay them on; then he had a complete selection—a woman's outfit, in fact—placed in each box, and instructions were issued that the small buyer should be sent to his department. There he found all that he wanted, and something more, ready on one counter for his inspection, and, if purchased, for packing—bonnets, parasols, boots, shoes, slippers, fans, stays, laces, tapes, flannels, caps, gloves,

stockings, ribbons, all of the newest fashions, patterns, and dyes.

The experiment was a complete success ; all the buyers were cleared and their goods booked to them before the afternoon came on. Then, when the long room or warehouse, so busy in the morning, was empty and quiet, my friend determined to carry on a little business without goods or capital on his own account. He stretched a canvas sheet across the middle of the room ; on one side of it were the goods to be offered to-morrow, and on the other side he gave dancing-lessons to his fellow-employees, and he was never without pupils. So things went on, to the satisfaction of the heads of the business, and he was on the way to preferment, when dancing gave way to devotion and he had "a call." He became gloomy, desponding, despairing, and haggard, not at all in the best and confident mood for capturing the country customers. Mr. Moore, hearing of this, sent for him, looked him over, and said in his brusque way, "You've got into bad company, and women will ruin you." "No ; God forbid !" my friend said. "Sinner I am among sinners, and I know not what to do to be saved, but I have had a call." "Well," said Mr. Moore, "I am sorry I misunderstood your ailment. You have served us well here, but you must leave." "I expected as much," was the reply. "But," added Mr. Moore, "you will go to St. Bees at my expense, and from there, I trust, into the Church." Off he went, and when his Divinity terms had been kept, he came back to London to be ordained, and Mr. Moore gave him the appointment of chaplain to the staff of the firm in Bow Churchyard. There he remained for some time till I made his acquaintance.

I had on my property in St. George-in-the-East a large chapel in which Church of England services had always been conducted under a licence. Dr. Bryan King, the rector at the mother-church, had no congregation, and the West-end lay leaders of the Evangelical party pressed me over and over again to sell the freehold of the chapel, that it might be consecrated and have a district allotted to it. At last very reluctantly I consented, the proposal was carried through, and the first minister appointed was the once assistant seller in Cheapside. So we were brought together, and so we worked together for many years. Under his guidance I built a small ragged-school, which was soon filled, and where he taught and trained the little roughs. He was all that one would wish in that capacity, always cheerful with them, ready with repartee, and a match for all their cunning and audacity. One of the first that came was a wild little savage—no cap, no shoes or stockings, a shirt with only one sleeve, trousers in bits with only one button and the waistcoat with none, completed his suit. He was very suspicious at first, on his guard like a wild animal that avoided handling or capture. He came round in time, and, having excellent abilities, made good use of the school. After leaving he attained to the position of a foreman cork-cutter in St. Mary Axe. Many, if not most, of the children were without shoes, and we did nothing to encourage their use. They are an article of dress which the young everywhere, especially in wet and cold weather, are better without. The Irish and the Scotch, outside town life, sat in those days on their school forms with naked feet and shins. Coming in from the storms, the little limbs steamed as they dried, and were not starved during lessons from a wrapping of cheap, sodden

boots and spongy stockings. In a few years my friend was appointed to the new church of St. Benet's, Bow Road, and I saw less and less of him.

His successor was of quite another sort. The School Board for London was established and I closed the ragged-school, but placed my annual subscription to it in the hands of the new vicar. Before long, however, I got by the post from him in a pamphlet form an appeal to relieve the distress in his district. It was the usual reckless falsehood. He stated that he personally knew of strong men and their families starving in our midst. There were illustrations, but not of the starvation cases. I lost no time in writing to ask him for the addresses of some of these cases, as it would be my duty to come to London without delay to visit them. They might be my own tenants, and I was as well a guardian for the parish. In reply I got no addresses, but a remonstrance, saying it was too much to expect that these penniless people would come down seventy miles to explain their need to me. Of course I at once desired this shuffler to read my letter more carefully, and he would see it was my intention to come up to London as soon as he would let me know the addresses to go to. The next letter from him was of a priestly nature to inform me that the spiritual friend and guide of the poor, admitted into their confidence, should never betray the secrets of their sad family wants and miseries. There was, after this, nothing left for me to do but to say that in future he must not expect any further money assistance. I think it was a year afterwards that I had a letter from him, dated from a bishop's palace, expressing his regret at the statements he had made, admitting, I imagine, their untruth ; and shortly after he went his way from East London.

“ Slumming ” was then coming into vogue. In a very severe winter with prolonged frost, when a stop was put to all hunting, Guardsmen were seen in Ratcliff Highway, with their pockets full of money, and bestowing, it was popularly believed, as much as £25 at a visit among the impoverished ladies who grace the poor pavement there in scarlet morocco boots and bare heads, their hair dark and shining with a rich dressing of oil. About this time, however, an excellent society was founded, mainly by men in the Army—the Society for the Relief of Distress, who, after some experience, appreciated the difficulty and set themselves to learn how to deal with poverty wisely, and gave their time, money, and personal services to abating its causes. This fashionable amusement was regarded for the most part as a sort of winter gipsying, furnishing ample topic for conversation and “ collections,” with some excitement, and the appearance of daring and risk such as might be experienced among the Redskins and their squaws, on the other side of the Mississippi.

In September I went again with a friend for a walk in Devonshire. We paid a visit to our local taxation chief in Parliament, Sir Massey Lopes, at his lovely place Maristow, on the banks of the Tavy, near to its junction with the Tamar. At that time he rented the old monastic house and the shooting of Buckland Monachorum. On a fine Sunday afternoon we walked up to this peaceful solitude. At the Reformation the monastery had been dissolved, and the estate passed, in the time of Elizabeth, into the possession of the Drakes. Half-way up, across the great hall, a floor was constructed, and a large dwelling-room was thus formed below it. In this was built a minstrel gallery

with a balustrade in front of it, and on this balustrade were fastened the great (brass, I think) branched poop-lanthorne of the famous commander's ship, and by the side of it the very drums with which he had drummed round the world. I tapped them with my walking-stick, but they were dumb. They had "had their say," however. On the walls of a corridor or passage upstairs was fastened one of his manuscript charts with notes, and, at the bottom of the slope ebbed and flowed the river down which he must have passed to his game of bowls at Plymouth Hoe.

When in Parliament I made but little use of the hansom cab, but preferred walking to and fro across the Green Park ; but I venture to record the origin of the hansom cab, as I had it from the mouth of a coachbuilder in my county town who had gone to work as a journeyman in London with a master of the name of Hansome, who had invented a peculiar cart for the quick delivery of coal into the cellar. It was hung on a bent axle, bringing the body low, which was so constructed that when backed it allowed the coals to be tipped directly over the coal-hole in the pavement. The ingenious part was in the balance, and so much of it was, I believe, patented. The cab followed on this by evolution ; the driver in the seat behind with the fare inside balancing as the coal did, and the horse running free with no weight on his back. These cabs were also patented, and after a while took with the public, but in a year or two their use declined, I know not why. However, there was a revival, and their use as the London gondola became permanently general.

The top of an omnibus gives a delightful view of street life and scenery, and, with half an hour to spare, I would climb up one and tell the "cad" to put

me down when I had had my pennyworth. A favourite pennyworth was over London Bridge with the Custom House in view, the lumbering barges trailing up or down with the tide, and the fruit steamers unloading their tempting cargoes on the wharf at the bridge end. The river below, bearing on its flood all the bounties of the world, unrestrained and unmolested by "reciprocity" or "protection," harmonised with the life of the free people which welcomed the treasures brought from all the world to its shores. All went on in an active but orderly way, and this state of easy commotion seemed to culminate in the "pool" of vehicles and foot-passengers between the Mansion House and the Bank of England.

How the Jew seemed to prevail in these regions; here, in his polished hat, well-cut clothes, his memoranda and his ledgers; there, away beyond Houndsditch, in his shabby, well-worn garb; but both classes of their community distinguished by untiring diligence, inspired brains, good health, love and care of their children, and reverence for their parents! I had a clerical friend in my young days who wrote, preached, prayed, and begged for their return to Jerusalem; and I had another irreverent friend who assured him that his efforts were of no avail, as the people of Israel would never leave London as long as old clothes were to be bought there.

I have omitted to record the restoration, a year or two before the time of which I am now speaking, of Naseby Church, in which I was interested. It was decided to take the tower down and rebuild it, adding a spire on the top. The contract was taken by a literary builder, a Nonconformist and garrulous; Cromwell and Naseby Field were favourite themes on which he dilated. In-

side the tower, about two feet below the surface, the excavators came on the remains of over a dozen bodies, no doubt of the wounded who had died in the village. The builder informed me of this discovery, and with an air of great importance added the strange fact that all the skulls were perfectly "spherical." I was set wondering to what race of men these could belong, when all at once it occurred to me that this prig wished to pay a tribute to the "Roundheads'" memory, and to illustrate his knowledge of English history.

In 1873, in wandering in the London suburbs, I discovered one Sunday, in a very poor cottage near Kensal Green, squeezed in between the tracks of the Great Western and the London & North-Western Railways, and touching the fence of the former, two old-fashioned women engaged in the cultivation of dwarf cactuses, much in fashion then, and sold in small, bright red pots for the drawing-room table. There were only two rooms on the ground-floor; they inhabited one, and a costermonger the other. There was a passage-room to the coster's apartment, and his donkey had also to make use of it to get to his shed. They complained of the donkey's feet going through their boarded floor and leaving troublesome holes in it, and as we became better acquainted, they begged me to find them some redress; but all I could do for them was to nail the top of a box over the worst hole. At the back, near the donkey's stall, was a small, almost ruinous greenhouse with paint gone and the putty crumbling away; but in this sorry nursery they reared with marvellous skill the miniature plants. They were grown in, or rather on, burnt clay, and were propagated by tiny offsets. These, placed on the ballast in the smallest sized pots, were left alone to take root. The trouble, however, was

in the Flying Dutchman daily rushing by, and, as the women explained, "setting these little chaps a-rolling on to the ground before they had anchored themselves." This tried them terribly, but they were very patient. The two little women, their queer plants, and their skill, the costermonger and the donkey, interested me so much that I paid them several visits. They tried hard to find out my name and my calling, but to no purpose. At last, as I sat on their only chair, one said to the other, "You ask him, Mary," and Mary, thus encouraged, both sitting on the edge of their bed, said, "Are you Mr. Gladstone?" One Sunday, when I went on my visit, I found them in really tidy clothes, and they promptly shut me in to tell me "The master is here." "Oh!" I said, "then I'll be off." "Don't do that," they replied; "come and look at him." So, taking me through the coster's room, they pointed to a huge German smoking a long china-bowled pipe among his plants. His name was Pfersdorf, or something like it, and, as he beckoned me to come on, I did so, and we shook hands and soon got into conversation, under difficulties, as he spoke very broken English. He expressed himself as well pleased with the condition of his plants, and told me he had two other establishments, one at Munich or Vienna, the other, the largest, at Paris. He thought the one at Paris was worth several thousand pounds, and went on to tell me the agony of apprehension he suffered when Paris was besieged. Besides his plants there, he had an aunt in charge of them, and for weeks he could get no tidings of them. Then, taking out his pocket-book, he showed me a letter, a tiny piece of thin paper, with a few words on it, which with frowns and angry features he read to me, "I am well and your aunt is well." "Not one word, you

observe, about my plants. In another month I got another letter ; here it is—see it. ‘ Your aunt is well, and I am well.’ I could tear my hair ; not one word about my plants. Was there ever such cruel people ! As soon as it was possible to get inside Paris, all in ruins and hot ashes, I made my way sadly to my greenhouses, and would you believe it ? there was not one pane of glass broken ! ” “ And how,” I asked, “ was your aunt ? ” “ Oh ! she was well enough.”

CHAPTER XIII

LAST YEARS IN PARLIAMENT

THIS year (1873) I encouraged the registration of a provident society by the labourers in our village, with only 133 inhabitants, all told. I knew that about £2,000 a year was paid away in wages, and most of that sum would go for food, clothing, and domestic articles. I calculated that £1,500 might be spent in the stores of the industrial society. Five labourers came in, with the rector and myself, to make up the legal seven shareholders. Our rules, including one requiring all trade to be for ready money, were approved by the Registrar of Friendly Societies in Abingdon Street, Westminster, and we started with a capital paid up on seven shares at £1 each. We hired a room at the quiet little public-house, and started with a stock-in-trade of a minute book, twenty shareholders, books of rules, a painted title-board, and a device for our seal (a bundle of sticks held together with a withe). The publican's wife was appointed storekeeper; her pay was one shilling in the pound on sales. The first trade outlay was in ink, paper, steel pens, pencils, tape, needles, pins, lucifers, candles, soap, and violet powder. Custom came, but no shareholders, and it wanted only a few weeks to the end of the quarter. Then, when the accounts had to be made up officially, a dividend of over ten shillings in the pound on the purchases made by the shareholders was declared and distributed; the other customers who were not shareholders

got nothing, but the profit on their purchases went to swell the shareholders' dividend. This threw a light on the new enterprise, and before the next quarter was out, the number of shareholders was doubled, as was the capital, now £14. Then a move was made out of the room at the public-house to the hedge-carpenter's cottage, with his wife for storekeeper, and from that after a while to better premises again. Before many years were out the sales rose to my estimate, £1,500 a year. Since then, by reason of the departure of the rector, who had acted as secretary, and the appointment of another rector under orders to discourage the society, my co-operative friends have been obliged to give up their premises in the village and take others some distance away. This of course reduced the sales, but for many more years its useful existence continued, until at last its shareholders decided on winding-up. There were no debts to meet, everyone got his share capital back in coin, and the storekeeper took over the stock at its wholesale value and ran the little business as a private one, but still on the ready-money rules.*

This spring, after a separation of thirty-six years, I met with the widow of my famous master, Dr. Arnold of Rugby. Her daughter was married to my friend W. E. Forster, and he it was who brought us together again at his house in London—a very great pleasure indeed to both of us. How the old Rugby days came back

* It was in this store that Mr. Pell added to the mirth of the neighbourhood by putting up a board with the following legend, seen by him first in a store in the Western States of America :

Trust is Bust,
Bust is Hell,
No Trust, no Bust,
No Hell.

again! I recalled her kindness to me after the loss of my father at twelve years of age, the pity she bestowed on me, and the lonely walks I took by the dull river Avon, gathering the tall yellow iris to take to her as a present. I remembered, too, how I used to see her seated on her pretty white pony coming out into the road from the school-house carriage gate, with the tall, manly figure of her husband by her side, striding along for the warm afternoon walk in his canvas trousers. What respect and admiration, not unmingled with fear, that commanding figure inspired! With many, I make no doubt, he was regarded with fear alone, and by such he was only talked of as "Black Arnold."

The Shah of Persia paid England a visit, and I went with other Members of Parliament to a great reception at the Guildhall. As the evening was a fine one and the rooms very hot and crowded, I got into company with the firemen, and went with one of them all over the roof of the Guildhall, looking down through some openings at the sight of the bubbling, glittering mites below like ants in an overturned nest.

In July I went away east to Bethnal Green Museum, where Sir Richard Wallace was allowing an exhibition of some of his precious works of art. I spent hours there of wonder and delight. There were some pictures illustrating the five senses that were especially engaging. They were all of handsome or pretty women exercising the different senses, and extraordinarily expressive. I do not think these are—at least, I looked, and failed to find them—in the collection in Manchester Square.

This month there was a terrible tragedy in the Midlands in the death of a gamekeeper I had known from his boyhood—a man very ignorant of the laws under which game

is protected, but a servant very zealous, poor fellow ! in his master's interests. On a bright July morning, going with his son his early rounds, he came in an open field on poachers. As he knew the men, his proper course would have been to have seen them off the land and summon them, instead of which he attempted an arrest. The result was resistance ; a shot was fired which killed him, while his son and another man were seriously wounded. His master's property was near a large manufacturing town where the preservation of game, to be effectual, requires an adequate staff of keepers and assistants. Where the keepers on an estate are known to be men selected for their physical powers, resolution, and courage, as well as for their determination and ability to inflict at once, and by the aid of the law, the severest punishment on poachers, game trespassers are few and far between. Poachers will risk their liberty over the chance of a good bag, but are not so ready to risk their persons or their limbs and the chance of a broken head. There is something, too, in the features, bearing, and action of a keeper that cows the poacher. There was a fine old keeper on an estate near one of my farms for whom I had a great admiration. He was passing along a road on a murky November evening, when he met two notorious poachers with their nets and a dog. In a moment he got out his knife, whistled the little dog to him, cut his throat, and flung him over the hedge. " Now," he said, " if you don't make off, I will serve you both in the same way." The bloody sight of summary jurisdiction on their dog so unnerved them that they walked off without dispute or delay.

This year (1874) a great discovery of early editions of Shakespeare and other authors was made at the house

of my schoolfellow Sir Charles Isham, Lamport Hall. In the library of that house was the usual collection of British and other classics in folios and quartos of very respectable dates in handsome bindings. It contained no modern books from Sir Walter Scott downwards, and I never saw a single volume from those shelves in the hands of any reader. Still, the library was an extensive one, so much so that it was thought desirable to have it properly catalogued. This was undertaken by a famous London firm of booksellers, who for that purpose sent down their representative, Mr. Edmunds. This gentleman was engaged, off and on, for some years at the work. At last it was completed on a certain forenoon, and Mr. Edmunds took his seat at the luncheon table before leaving for London. As there were some minutes to spare before the train was due, Lady Isham said to him, "Oh! Mr. Edmunds, there are upstairs in an attic in a chest of drawers some old books—waste paper, in fact; perhaps you would just have a look at them." Upstairs Mr. Edmunds went, and in about ten minutes came down with a small book or booklet bound in old limp vellum with leather strings instead of a clasp to keep its pages close. Holding it up, he said, "This seems a curiosity. May I take it to London?" In a few days came a note from his employers, offering Sir Charles £7 (if I remember right) for this small copy of Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis" and "The Passionate Pilgrim"; but Sir Charles said he did not want to sell books. So this one was returned, and shortly after Mr. Edmunds paid another visit, to examine thoroughly the other contents of the attic. Then there were revelations. The "Venus and Adonis" was the edition of 1599, perfect in every respect, and so far unique. In the library of Trinity

College, Cambridge, I have seen another copy of the same date, but imperfect. Sir Charles at last was persuaded to sell some of the "attic" treasures, and this little volume made £2,000. Among other little volumes bound up in the same way were Decker's Poems, and others of a "free" character. There were playbills of Shakespearian time, and several copies of his spurious plays. Several volumes were unique. The history of their scarceness is that on account of their licentious tone all these publications had been condemned under an episcopal order to be brought in and burnt. The Isham of the day, however, who had seen a good deal of the world, retained his copies, putting them out of sight for safety, and there they slept in the attic of Lamport Hall, not wholly undisturbed, for there was a Kettering bookseller who yearly bought up waste paper for grocers' packages, and, in his spring rounds, he was sent upstairs to bring down and pay for what he wanted. It was the small size of the sheets of "Venus and Adonis" and other rarities that saved them, for they were not large enough to "do up" a pound of butter, soap, or sugar. What treasures went for that ignoble use no one knows, and so we must be content that so much has been left.

At this time (1874) I was much occupied in continuing the reform of Poor Law administration in my union, with wonderful results in the reduction of the number of paupers and promotion of industrious habits. At the same time I was active in inducing the sanitary authority, of which I was a member, to sewer thoroughly several villages from which enteric fever was never for long absent. My view was that engineers rather than doctors were wanted in places where cesspits, dung-heaps, and pig-styes were close to the wells, and where with

such conditions typhoid virus poisoned the drinking-water.

In January, 1875, I was one of a deputation to the Home Secretary, Mr. Cross, pressing the Government to relieve ratepayers of some of the heavy exceptional charges for such purposes as prisons. The deputation at the time met with little encouragement ; but before long the local taxation reformers had succeeded in transferring the cost and control of the prisons to the Treasury and Home Office. This was a gain in every respect. Many small gaols were closed, and a better class of officer was appointed for governors.

Early this year (1875) the question of English tenant right became of interest, and was the subject of discussion in and out of Parliament. There were three causes operating to bring about a desire on the part of occupiers for legislation on this subject. These were the presumption in law that improvements made by the tenants became the property of the landlord ; the inability on the part of limited owners to make agreements with their tenants which would be binding on their successors ; and the disinclination of tenants with some corresponding disinclination of owners to bind themselves by written agreements, even where both sides were in a position to make them. No sensible person ought to allow such a disinclination to influence him, and I was heartily in favour of written agreements being adopted wherever circumstances permitted. No legislation, however, was needed in such cases ; common sense and business habits ought to suffice.

It was in the other two cases that legislation was needed ; namely, first the presumption in law that tenants' improvements became the property of the landlord, who

by bringing about a change of tenancy could thus appropriate them to his own profit. In many instances landlords were legally incapacitated from giving tenants security, where both sides desired it, against this jeopardy. The impediments were of old standing, and though, owing to the competition for farms, they had to be accepted by tenants, none the less they were serious hindrances to improvements in agriculture, endangered the tenant's capital which had been expended in improvements, and placed him at the mercy of an impecunious or covetous landlord. I thought that these impediments might be removed by legislation, so that the landlord might be placed in a position to enter into a binding contract with a tenant on the subject of his improvements. When both parties were free and competent to make an agreement, I would leave it to them to come to terms. I was entirely against compulsory tenant right, but in favour of annulling the presumption that tenants' improvements became the property of the landlord.

Step by step, however, Parliament added a Compulsory Tenant Act to the statutes at large. All I could do was to insert a clause that no valuer's or umpire's award should be valid unless it set out in detail the items with particulars of the award and the sum allowed for each item. The valuers made a general protest against this provision, and as a rule shirk complying with it; it is the landlord's fault if he does not insist on it.

In March I was much engaged in establishing medical clubs in every parish of the union in which I was guardian. The medical men were very obliging and helpful. I also got the guardians to publish a statement of all their parochial charities, as set out in Lord Robert

Montagu's return, and then, in every case where these funds were bestowed on persons in receipt of parish relief, I took steps to bring that improper practice to an end.

In May I took the chair at a great meeting of Friendly Societies in Leicestershire. About 700 were present, and I did not let the opportunity pass without addressing them on the subject of the Poor Laws, and pointing out how faulty administration, in granting outdoor relief, operated against the full success of their splendid institutions. This view, I found, was widely accepted by the leaders of the societies.

On June 1, 1875, I went off to the Bow Road to Moody and Sankey the American Evangelists' meeting. There was a very large space, which included a boarded fence, and there was a grand-stand with Moody and Sankey on it, supported by evangelical enthusiasts, from West London and elsewhere. I did not presume to be among them, but had a good commanding place at the side. Thence I saw a pretty scene, reminding me of Hogarth's picture, of two pious young friends singing away over one hymn-book with much fervour. Ere long, in this particular case, the sequel was a marriage at St. George's, Hanover Square. The young couple, besides being devout, were extremely well endowed. Below me were the "masses," male and female in fair proportion. On a seat was a young workman, behind him was an empty seat or bench; to this two young women with the extravagant feathered head of the East Londoner were attracted, and leaning forward, they began talking and flirting with the man. At first he resisted their attractions, keeping his eyes fixed on Moody, but by degrees he gave way and acknowledged their approaches. Then from behind another figure came on the scene, a little middle-aged woman in

a tight shawl and a plain neat bonnet. She quietly placed herself by the side of the feathered hats, and leaning forward, took up the conversation with the man. In a few minutes his laughter ceased, he got fidgety and began to look serious. She had got control of him completely. In vain "the feathers" tapped his shoulder and tried persuasion. Their flaunts and jokes ceased, and they moved away, completely routed. When they were out of sight, the little missionary departed too. I stayed till it was as dark as a full moon would permit, then I mounted an omnibus, followed by a seaman in a mate's jacket, who sat next to me on the knife-board. When we reached the Minories I told him that if he wished to go to the Docks, he should get down. He was, however, going to the West End. He had heard Moody and Sankey some time ago, and being in London for the night, thought this was as pleasant a way of spending an evening as any other. He was returning to Liverpool next day.

June 5, 1875, affords a fair example of a day's engagements. I breakfasted with Henry Chaplin in Park Lane to meet Welby and Turner, two county M.P.s, and go through the Agricultural Holdings Bill. Then I attended the meeting of the Metropolitan Asylums Board in Spring Gardens, afterwards going on to the Charity Commission for an hour to talk over the coming Poor Law debate with Henry Longley; and in the evening I dined at Willis's Rooms, with the Prince of Wales in the chair, at a meeting of the Royal Agricultural Benefit Society. The next day, Sunday, I went to the service in St. George's East parish church, where Fraser, Bishop of Manchester, preached a fine sermon. I had much conversation with him afterwards at the rectory.

On the 22nd there was an excited scene in the House

in connection with a Shipping Bill dealing with the chartering and use of unseaworthy ships—"coffin ships," as they were termed. Mr. Plimsoll, a great enthusiast, had taken the matter up. He had an interview with me, and he asked me to back one of his Bills. I told him I was surprised at so stiff a Radical coming to me for co-operation, and asked him what induced him to do so, seeing that I was a Tory member for an inland county with no seafaring experience or knowledge. He said, "Because if you give your consent I can trust you." I sympathised with Mr. Plimsoll, but I thought it better not to back his Bill. He complained that the Shipping Bill was now sacrificed to the Agricultural Holdings Bill, which, considering the urgency of the case and that human life was at stake, gave him a right to complain. Then, standing at the bar, he moved the adjournment of the house, and having found a place at the front bench below the gangway, he entreated the Government not to consign some thousands of living human beings to a miserable death. He declared that since the commercial marine was committed to the care of the Board of Trade, the whole matter was getting worse and worse. Ship-owners of murderous tendencies outside the House who are immediately represented inside the House had frustrated every effort to procure a remedy. He then quoted the case of a ship, the *Bard of Avon*. He said he must speak out, and entreated the House to consider its position. A secretary at Lloyds' told a friend that during thirty years he had not known of a single ship that had been broken up voluntarily by the owners because she was worn out. Ships pass from hand to hand, till bought up by reckless speculators and sent to sea with precious human lives. Every winter hundreds

and thousands of brave men are sent to death and their wives are made widows and their children fatherless, in order that a few speculative scoundrels may make unhallowed gain. "There are," he said, "ship-owners in this country of ours who never build a ship and who never buy a new one, but are simply 'ship-knackers,' and I heard an ex-Secretary of the Treasury in the lobby call one of my colleagues in this house a 'ship-knacker.' I give notice of a question which I will put on Tuesday, next to the President of the Board of Trade [after naming four vessels which were lost with eighty-seven lives in 1874 and two others abandoned at sea], whether the owner, Edward Bates, is a member for Plymouth or some other person of the same name; and I shall ask some questions too about members on this side of the House." Then, in a loud voice, clenching his fists, he declared his determination to unmask the villains who send these sailors to death. The Speaker presumed that the hon. member did not apply that expression to any member of this House. Whereupon Plimsoll, in an excited tone, stepped up to the front of the table, and added, "I did, Sir, and I don't mean to withdraw it." The whole House reminded me of a pack of hounds in cover. Asked again if he would withdraw the expression, Mr. Plimsoll, amid cries of "Withdraw!" declared he would not. The Speaker left the matter to the judgment of the House. Meanwhile Mr. Plimsoll, who had taken a seat, again came up to the front of the table, placed a written paper on it, saying, "I shall be very happy to submit to the judgment of the House, and this is my protest." He remained standing at the table for a minute, and then amid cries of "Chair!" resumed his seat, greatly excited. For myself,

I sympathised with him, and being pretty well assured of the truth of his denunciations, I felt that some such bold, if unseemly, demonstration was needed to put a stop to such atrocities. Then Mr. Disraeli got on his legs, and described the conduct of his brother-member as "almost unparalleled," "and," chimed in Mr. Plimsoll, "so is that of the Government." Mr. Disraeli went on to move that Mr. Speaker do reprimand the hon. member for Derby for his disorderly and violent conduct. Mr. Plimsoll after this at once left the House, exclaiming with much gesticulation in passing the bar that he "would expose them," while his friends tried to persuade him to offer an explanation. Lord Hartington, the leader of the Opposition, made some observations; and then Mr. Sullivan, who had gone out with Mr. Plimsoll, appealed to the House to be considerate and indulgent, stating that he believed his friend to be extremely ill. He did not seek to justify conduct that had fallen short of the respect due to the House. He added that he held in his hand documents which had wrought the hon. member to the pitch witnessed to-day. While he had not the remotest idea of making his case worse by going into matters which would hurt the susceptibility of any hon. members, he still did not believe that his friend, even if brought to the scaffold, would retract what in calm judgment he had said. Nevertheless, with regard to the expressions used, he felt sure that in a few days, if time were given, the hon. member would set himself right with his colleagues in the House. Mr. Disraeli, upon this, thought it best that Mr. Plimsoll should not be required to attend till that day week. Good, however, came out of the rebellion of the member for Derby, for in due course he carried

his Bill, and the Plimsoll mark is now to be seen on all sea-going ships, indicating the line below which they should not be brought down by cargo. To Mr. Plimsoll also we are indebted for foot-warmers for all classes in railway coaches.

In January, 1876, I was nominated by the Local Government Board a guardian for the union of St. George-in-the-East, and on the 21st took my seat at 3 p.m. The business was over by 9 p.m., and I returned west with A. G. Crowder, whose disciple I became.* He had brought about the most marvellous improvement in the policy of the board, which resulted in the entire abolition of out-door relief.

Later in the month Professor Bryce, Mr. Fowler of Aylesbury, and Mr. Crowder came to stay with me, and the next day we had a good Poor Law conference at Northampton, with Lord Spencer in the chair, when Bryce read an excellent paper on out-door relief, and Canon Bury one on Poor Law and Charity; Crowder, much as he disliked it, made an excellent speech,—all

* Some time about the year 1875 Mr. A. G. Crowder, fresh from Eton and Christ Church, took up the task which has now occupied more than thirty of the best years of his life—namely, the better administration of the Poor Law in St. George-in-the-East, one of the poorest parishes in London. He has proved the possibility and advantage of a restrictive policy. Under present conditions, as evidenced by recent revelations at Poplar and West Ham, the task of obtaining enlightened administration is well-nigh insuperable. Mr. Crowder's failure to attract imitators elsewhere is as important a feature in his experiment as his success in his own union, and is most conclusive proof of the hopeless inadequacy of present arrangements for carrying on this particular branch of local government in London. Mr. Crowder has never received nor sought any acknowledgment for his devotion, but it was a subject on which Mr. Pell was ever eager to enlarge. When a man of Mr. Pell's independent character describes himself as a disciple, he means to convey a very high compliment to his master.

of it, I fear, "pearls before swine." On 1 February I was in London for one night to attend at the St. George's East Board of Guardians, when we decided to abolish pauper labour in the workhouse and to engage thirty paid servants.

One evening in this month I went to the Princess's Theatre with Mrs. Winn, on the understanding that if she did not cry she should never go to the theatre with me again. However, we both used our handkerchiefs repeatedly, though Jefferson in "Rip Van Winkle" was, I thought, not quite so pathetic as when I had seen him ten years previously. On March 3, at Mr. Disraeli's request, I spoke on Mr. O. Morgan's burial resolution. We had a majority of thirty-one—fifteen better than was expected. On March 15 I dined with the Speaker, who said the prefix to the Queen's new title of Empress should be, not "Dei Gratia," but "Dizzy Gratia." Charles Fitzwilliam was there, and told us that the following telegram had come from Lord Northbrook in India to Lord Salisbury: "We want six milliners, three with drawers and three without." Reply: "Explain your telegram." Correction: "We want six Milners" (safes), etc., etc.

I thought the Speaker's dining-room of very unpleasing proportion, so lofty and narrow. An old-fashioned borough member, dining there next to the Speaker, said to him, "Mr. Speaker, sir, in this room I always feel as if I was in a sawput" (sawpit); and indeed that is just what it resembles.

On May 1, 1876, I attended a meeting at the Farmers' Club, of which I was a member, when Mr. Fowler, M.P. for Cambridge, read a paper on the Poor Laws, and Professor Bryce and Mr. Crowder spoke. The next day was the usual meeting of the Central Chamber of Agricul-

ture, followed by the testimonial dinner to C. S. Read at the Cannon Street Hotel, when a cheque for £5,500 was presented to him, and a piece of plate, in recognition of his sacrifice in resigning office as Parliamentary Secretary of the Local Government Board in order to mark his disapproval of the course officially adopted by the Duke of Richmond with reference to the contagious diseases of animals—a course which he and others thought would not meet the emergencies of the case.

In May I seconded the amendment on the Licensing Boards Bill in a speech which seemed to amuse the House. I reminded Mr. Speaker that, in the growth of a town, by the addition of a large suburb taken out of the adjacent fields, the first building put up was a church and, hard by, the next a public-house. Beer and Bible were thus made contiguous in no unholy fellowship. Churches might be used for bad purposes as well as public-houses. It was the use the place was put to that sanctified or defiled it; it was devotion in the one place and temperance in the other that justified their existence; and then I supported my argument by reference to the practice of Robinson Crusoe, who always took a dram before going on his knees to pray.

I met at an evening party, and was introduced to, Sir William Gull. He was opposed to interference with the prosecution of scientific research by means of vivisection, and was of opinion that admission to hospitals by subscribers' orders should be discontinued, and that a committee of infirmary governors should decide on cases for admission. Orders, he thought, might be placed at the disposal of ministers of religion and certain employers; but in principle disease and accident, not poverty, should be the tests for admission.

I attended very regularly the meetings of the Board of Guardians for St. George-in-the-East, sometimes not getting away till after ten at night. This month, too, I, with A. G. Crowder, attended a meeting at Leicester, with the mayor in the chair, to start a Charity Organisation Society. Crowder spoke extremely well, and a committee was appointed. Afterwards the society was formed.

On June 13, 1879, the Government Poor Law Amendment Bill was before the House at a morning sitting, and I carried my amendment by which three years' residence gives a settlement. This was a very important and humane change in the law, and put an end to a fruitful source of litigation.

On Midsummer Day, with my colleagues on the Metropolitan Asylums Board, I visited on inspection our asylum at Leavesden for imbecile paupers. It had cost us £171,000—equal to £85 a bed. On July 6 I had a two hours' conference with Lord Sandon over the Education Bill, and the next day I met by appointment Mr. Jones, the relieving officer of Stepney Union, to have his opinion of out-door relief. He believed the people would be better without it if it was entirely discontinued. We had a Poor Law conference in London on the 17th, with my friend the Right Hon. W. E. Forster in the chair; but I grieve to say his sad views on out-door relief were not sound. The next day, when I was about to move my resolution on the amendment of the Poor Laws in England, I was promptly counted out. I anticipated as much, for the subject was not one enlivened by party strife.

In October I gave up one of the farms I rented in Leicestershire. The sheep sold very well at the auction,

ewes averaging 56s. and lambs 35s. each ; the live stock made £1,400 on 200 acres. Among this stock, however, were six old horses, rising from eighteen to twenty years.

On November 16 I attended the Poor Law conference at Lincoln, when Mr. Jones, relieving officer of Stepney, read a paper on out-door relief, the bestowal of which is dispensed with in his union. On November 30 I went to the Rugby Cattle Show, and afterwards to the Conservative dinner, where Newdegate fatigued us for over an hour in denouncing the Pope of Rome and all his subtleties. He is so like a hearse horse !

My friend Mr. A. G. Crowder took a great interest and part in the management of the Blue Brigade of Shoe-blacks working in the East of London and City. Frequently, when the meeting of the board of guardians was over in Old Gravel Lane, and after nine at night, we trudged off to the institution in Leman Street, and conferred with the manager there, and visited the rooms. The person in charge acted as manager and schoolmaster, keeping the accounts as well. No assistance was asked for or given in the way of subscriptions or donations ; the whole undertaking was self-supporting. The men were required to be in punctually at a fixed hour in the evening, when they declared their earnings for the day to the manager. After the establishment charge had been taken out of it, each made what use he liked of the rest, but every facility was provided for investing in the savings bank. The earnings were very considerable—much over a pound a week in many instances. Great care was taken in admission of men to the institution. No really able-bodied men were taken on ; the situations were reserved for cripples, dwarfs, and those physically precluded from the usual employments of the poor.

Very few, if any, were boys, though most, to a casual observer, looked like them. The work, in fact, was reserved for the disabled. The common room was well lighted and warmed, and the dormitories and beds thoroughly clean and comfortable. After an hour with these people, I made my way westward to the House of Commons.

Returning late one night, I hailed an omnibus at the top of the Minories. It was empty, but as I got in another passenger followed me, and seating himself by my side, began talking. He told me he had passed a wonderfully pleasant evening with the sexton of a church in the Minories—Holy Trinity, I think. He had tea with him, and instead of a loaf the sexton put a human head on the table, quite brown and dry, and told him it had been found by the builders in a mass of sawdust buried in front of the altar. It had belonged, he said, to a great lord many years ago, who was beheaded; the executioner had to strike twice. The nick in the neck, made by the cut which was ineffectual, was still to be seen. The sexton said the great lord was the patron of the sexton's church, and that his followers, getting hold of the head as soon as it was off, put it into a sack with sawdust (no doubt from the scaffold), and making off with it to the church, buried it there before the altar. This must have been, I fancy, the head of Brandon, Duke of Suffolk.

In the month of January, 1877, in company with the chairman, I visited the home of every pauper in the Brixworth Union. We found that many of those on the relief list were persons not requiring relief, while, in many instances, the paupers had evaded the relieving officer's inquiries as to relations and friends able to

contribute or keep them off the rates. I got at the truth in some cases from photographs framed and hung on the walls—likenesses of well-to-do personages in broadcloth, sometimes ornamented with a ring, who proved in many instances to be persons if not legally, at least morally, bound and able wholly or partly to support the pauper. In one case we found a man known to be intemperate, supplied regularly, on the parish doctor's report, with spirits for an alleged heart complaint.

In the adjoining parish was a group of so-called almshouses, six of them of one room each, built in a pretty style, with picturesque roofs and chimneys, and neat grass-plots and hedges in front. There was an inscription referring to their establishment and the virtues of the founders of these so-called almshouses. For lodging in this building a half-penny only per week was paid as rent by six widows, every one of whom was maintained out of the rates at the cost of £61 a year to the ratepayers. In this parish—the whole belonging to one owner, a most excellent and distinguished man—one-eleventh of the inhabitants were paupers. He said pathetically, "How could I help this state of things? I succeeded to it." In time he learnt better and became a valued assistant in the reforms. There was no want of liberality in his disposition; he only followed in the tradition of his elders, and, in compliance with this, a conventional cheque for £50 was sent every winter to the rector of the parish for distribution among the poor. He appointed a friend of mine rector, who, on the cheque coming, said he should be pleased, before he became almoner, to have the names of the persons the donor wished assisted, with particulars, and that

failing this, he would pass the cheque on to the agent. In the end, this suggestion for consideration led to the ill-advised gift being entirely discontinued.

On February 8, 1877, I was up in London again for the opening of Parliament, a function that always interested and amused me. The day was a lovely one, sunny and mild. Outside Palace Yard I found a ladder, which I mounted, near one of the iron entrance gates, and so got a good, quiet view of the Queen's procession; thence I made off in haste to the House of Lords, in time to get a good place at the bar. There was an awful crush, but I was amply rewarded and vastly amused to find Dizzy, now Lord Beaconsfield, already posted on the left-hand side of the Queen, holding up before his nose a huge scabbard (covering, I suppose, a two-handled blade), perfectly motionless and in a sort of Japanese dress. He might have been a product of Madame Tussaud's art. I afterwards got a seat in the Lords' gallery in time to see him sworn and take his seat as Lord Beaconsfield, which he did very composedly. A poor debate followed.

I met Sir George Jessel at dinner on the 21st, who deplored the mischief universally done to society by endowed charities and money doles. All this month, and for some months afterwards, I was, when at home, much occupied with the sewerage of villages in the union. We had Brixworth in hand at this time.

On March 2 I stayed the night at Harleston Hall with Lord Spencer, and the next day the Rev. William Bury and I went over to Althorp Park with Lord Spencer for a consideration of local charities and pauperism, and thence to a Northampton meeting of the Cattle Plague Committee.

On the 7th I dined with William H. Smith, and attended the Speaker's levee afterwards.

On March 8 I met for the first time Miss Octavia Hill—such a wonderfully intelligent face and such a clear voice! Lord Elcho brought about the meeting by asking us both to dinner in St. James's Place. I thought her the closest and plainest reasoner I had ever met. The party was a singular one, nearly all being of good birth, in very picturesque dresses, round a table in a room hung with magnificent pictures, to all of whom I, in my oldest House of Commons' clothes (for Lord Elcho had carried me off from there), must have presented a strange contrast. I had, however, an "under-study" in a poor man, a friend of Miss Hill. He was no fool, and a good worker in London, but having inadvertently suggested some improvement in charity organisation, on an invitation to explain, he got wandering and lapsed into "goody-goody," upon which he was "dissipated" with ease and good-humour by Miss O. Hill. Major Fitzroy was there (paralysed, poor man!), taking great interest in the Charity Organisation Society; also Sir H. Pelly, M.P. for Huntingdonshire, as well as Dick Grosvenor, both Poor Law reformers, and not idle at it either in London. So what with good pictures and a very good dinner, I was entirely happy.

On March 22 I had a long talk with the Duke of Richmond in Westminster Hall, when I counselled him not to impose severer restrictions on the live-stock trade unless by Act of Parliament.

On April 11, 1877, I went to the Privy Council and again saw the Duke of Richmond twice, insisting strongly on his taking the control of cattle plague cases out of the hands of the local authority in and about London.

He sent for Mr. Riley to confer with me, and the next day the Duke told me at the Privy Council office that the Government had decided to do what I wished to be done, and that the Order in Council was already signed. This was satisfactory. I was still making good attendances in the board-room of St. George-in-the-East workhouse.

On the 17th I was one of the wedding party at the marriage in Westminster Abbey of Reginald MacLeod of MacLeod and Agnes Northcote; Sir Stafford was then deprived of his daughter's secretarial assistance. On the 19th, with Edward Greene, M.P. for Bury St. Edmunds, I called on Lord Beaconsfield concerning Messrs. Biggar and Parnell's profligate abuse of the rules of the House. The old chief, however, was very cautious. On the 24th I dined with Backhouse to meet Miss Octavia Hill again and her lieutenant, Miss Cons.

On April 29 I heard Goschen's excellent speech on Trevelyan's motion for the extension of the franchise. With the English Poor Law as we have it and its unrestrained administration, he could not assent to any such proposal.

On November 10 I sold some barley, not my best, at Northampton market at 43s. per quarter. On the 13th the Agricultural Labourers' Union held a meeting in the village, the rector, the Rev. W. Bury, lending them the school and taking the chair. A temperate, mild affair, with justice on the labourers' side.

Being in pain and disabled from sciatica and rheumatism, I consulted Sir William Gull. The interview was rather singular. By his direction I stripped myself naked, and lay down on a sofa. The great man then, instead

of making any critical examination, entered on a discussion on hospital management and admission. We had previously gone into this question, I think at Sir Thomas Buxton's house, and it was one on which we agreed that disease, not poverty, was the proper qualification for admission to free hospital treatment. I think this must have gone on for over a quarter of an hour, when I suggested that there were patients waiting, and he would do well to dispose of my case; so he wrote a prescription and told me to come again in a month. I saw him again in a month's time, and very much the same conversation and examination took place.

July 17, 1878.—My sciatica had now become so painful that I could not keep my seat in the House, but had to go into a corridor upstairs and lie down till half-past one in the morning.

In September I had a terrible paroxysm of sciatica, causing me to roll on the floor for twenty minutes, and Hedley, the doctor, a clever fellow, came to advise me. He blistered me, but I could not sit down to any meal, and I began to get very weak. In spite, however, of this I went off on the 9th to Wilburton, taking Elev Dombu, my Norwegian servant, with me. I contrived to drive over the farms, and fell in with Tom Saberton, whom I had not seen for twenty years. The tenants' mismanagement was very trying to see and I felt sure that trouble was not far off. The time and prices were getting worse, and reached the climax next year.

On September 11 I laid a red brick in the house which Norfolk was building for himself; and on the 14th I went off to Buxton. I put myself under that excellent apothecary

cary Mr. Shipton at 5s. a visit, in his house, paid over the counter. I took the baths and his medicine as well as the Buxton water. Charles and Emily Isham came, Charles so crippled with rheumatism that he moved about by preference on all fours. Emily covered him over with a rug while he took his exercises on his hands and knees in the Crescent, groaning at intervals. This strange sight alarmed the fly horses, who shied at him to such a degree that the drivers made complaint, and he had to do his crawling out of sight.

Not having got rid entirely of sciatica, I went to Ramsgate on October 12, joining the Ishams there. I tried Turkish baths, and eating shrimps at Pegwell Bay.

On Tuesday, June 25, 1878, I brought to an end by a bold suggestion a controversy over a "Cattle Diseases" Bill which had been prolonged for several days in the House. Punch said my suggestion was "a sensible one in which, in spite of Mr. Read and Mr. Chaplin, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was fain to take refuge"; adding, "The Government should thank Mr. Pell for showing them the way out of a dilemma—and in a case, too, where even their well-compacted majority seemed in danger of falling to pieces under their feet.

"Punch much admires you, Albert Pell;
The reason why he's glad to tell,
'Tis that with common sense's spell
You guide your party, Albert Pell."

On July 8 the Lords' amendments to the Poor Law Amendment Bill were considered very late at night, and Goschen and I protested against this being done when no report of our remarks could be made public.

On the 10th I went down to Tiptree Hall to Mr. Mechi's annual meeting. He said it was to be his last one : he was seventy-six years old, a cheery, hearty, honest man as ever lived, but of course an enthusiast, and not in any sense an authority on agricultural science or practice, over which he must have wasted thousands. The statement he made on this occasion he afterwards printed, and gave me a copy of it. In it he said he knew the land of this kingdom, taken as a whole, to be not half farmed, and that our home-grown food could be considerably and profitably increased by a greater outlay of landlords' and tenants' capital, adding that while on some farms £20 or more per acre tenants' capital was employed, the average in England was only £6, and in Ireland £1. He said agriculture was shackled and fettered by antiquated land laws, and advocated its becoming a chattel for purposes of sale and transfer. He purchased this farm at £25 an acre in 1841. It has since been valued at £50 an acre. In 1868 the produce, wheat and straw off willow fields, sold for £29 4s. an acre, the grain making 63s. per quarter. He advocated covered yards, drains, steam in the field and at the homestead. Under the surface of the fields iron pipes were laid with hydrants to convey and distribute liquid manure to the crops—a hideous, unprofitable outlay. Mr. Mechi had resided for thirty-five years on the farm, and all his children were born there. His crops looked very good, but the loss of money on their production must have been considerable.

On July 17, 1878, on the invitation of Jacob Wilson, Tom Booth, of Shorthorn cattle notoriety, Clare S. Read and I dined in the Star and Garter at Richmond, in recognition of the important part we had taken in legis-

lation and otherwise for the suppression of cattle diseases and the protection against its introduction from foreign countries. Parliament was now much occupied over this question. Mr. Barclay, M.P. for Forfarshire, continuing most unreasonably fractious and contentious, I was moved to dress him down in debate, which I did amidst the cheers of the House on both sides.

On Saturday, the 27th, after the meeting of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, I attended the banquet given to Lords Salisbury and Beaconsfield at the Wellington Riding School.

On August 1 I went with C. S. Read to visit Mr. J. B. Lawes' experimental farm at Rothamsted. Oh, how unlike this business to Mechi's at Tiptree! The brains of both men equally active and vigorous, but in one speculative, in the other scientific. Before leaving the question of Mr. Mechi's farm I may mention that a Mr. Hoyle wrote to *The Times* during the very bad harvest of 1881 in praise of his methods, and to this letter I was tempted to reply in the following terms :

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES"

"SIR,—What can your correspondent, Mr. William Hoyle, in *The Times* of September 28, mean by inviting us to farm the whole cultivated land of the country after the fashion of the Tiptree farm ?

"The suggestion, surely, is a silly one, after the general conclusion sensible men have come to not to follow the Tiptree practice, its failure as a commercial undertaking being hardly disputed. Mr. Mechi was a genial, honourable, enterprising, and active man, making money as

a tradesman and obtaining notoriety as a farmer. His generosity and hospitality made Tiptree the happy hunting-ground for years of the theorist and enthusiast as well as of the agricultural loafer, who, with a mixture of pity and contempt, was ever ready to back his ephemeral opinions against the time-tried practice of professional farmers. The eccentricities of farming were welcomed at Tiptree and fostered with the abundant capital the owner once had at his disposal. So long as sunny seasons and public applause cheered the outlay, and a system of bookkeeping, not confined to farming, permitted accumulated losses to be carried to the capital account, the enterprise went forward, but the end of it all was not a financial success.

“This, then, is the lure Mr. William Hoyle flutters to divert £750,000,000 from existing securities at remunerative interest to the hazardous investment in live and dead farming stock and agricultural experiments. Does any one in his senses suppose that higher farming is a remedy for lower prices, or that adding to capital, making a poor return, further capital, that makes no return at all, is advice that farmers will follow, or that they can be brought to believe that a drastic change in the land laws will increase the yield of any farm occupied under fair and business-like conditions? As well contend that by taking thought a farmer might add a cubit to his stature. It is notorious that men working their own land are not faring better than many of their brethren who hold the land of others, and that those who have weathered the storm best are, in many instances, very humble—some might call them ignorant or uninformed—husbandmen, who work with their own hands on dairy farms or in localities where, from the high price of labour,

the unremitting toil of members of the family is exceedingly remunerative. With respect to the laws regulating the devolution of landed property, so far as they directly encourage the acquisition of enormous estates as a mere investment for money or personal aggrandisement, they are a source of weakness to the landed interest, as well as productive of social mischief, the extent of which it is difficult to estimate ; but in the practical conduct of business neither they nor foreign competition can be regarded with the same apprehension and concern as that which the state of the barometer, the sun, and the rain excite in the minds of those who have crops to sow and to save.

“ I am, your obedient servant,

“ ALBERT PELL.

“ WILBURTON. ”

During all this session, though suffering much pain from sciatica, I made good attendances at St. George's East Board of Guardians, and the Metropolitan Asylums Board, and took an active part in the sanitary proceedings instituted at Brixworth, and I was now appointed a member of the Royal Commission to inquire into the parochial charities of the City of London.

On November 19, 1878, I was in London at the Royal Commission on City Parochial Charities. On the following Sunday I thought it would be well to be present at the distribution of a dole, so went to morning service at St. Clement's, Eastcheap—a very comfortably furnished church, there being an endowment, I think, for this purpose out of these charities. The carpets and the cushions were all that could be wished. I saw but one citizen at the service, a fine, tall, portly old gentleman with

a grand head of white hair. After the Holy Communion I waited to see the dole of loaves, arranged in shelves at the west end of the north aisle, given away, but only one applicant (by deputy) put in an appearance. I then visited a charity pensioner's home in Swan Lane. The house was a very good one, occupied by a mother, son, and two daughters, all except the mother in very remunerative employment. They were at dinner, and invited me to sit down to it. They knew who I was, and in the simplest, plainest way answered my inquiries. What with wages and the city pension, the income was a really comfortable one; but with all this the mother was a pauper in receipt of out-door relief from the city guardians. Noticing my surprise, the son said they had been advised by the relieving officer to relinquish this, and they meant to do so.

On May 9, 1879, I was in London, and appointed chairman of the Metropolitan Poor Law Guardians' Association. The next day was the last meeting of the Select Committee on Commons. I was appointed by the House to sit on every Select Committee on Commons, and when dealing with Hampstead, I upset the Commissioners' proposal to level and tidy up Hampstead Heath as a regulated common, and it was ordered to remain in its present condition, with its old gravel-hole mounds and water-splashes untouched, thus preserving its wild and beautiful surface. I was very proud of this piece of legislation. On the 25th, at St. Stephen's Chambers, Lord Abergavenny, Sir Wm. Dyke, Lord Henry Thynne, Rowland Winn, Hardcastle, and myself consulted for two hours over election arrangements. On Saturday, June 6, the House of Commons did not adjourn till ten minutes into Sunday morning.

On June 14 a Royal Commission on Agriculture was appointed, of which the Duke of Richmond became chairman ; and I heard that next day the Cabinet would consider whether I should visit America as an assistant commissioner. On the 15th the Duke told me that I was appointed with Clare Sewell Read to that office, I declined the services of a secretary. On June 19, 1879, I had an interview with Sir Alexander Grant, who gave me much useful Canadian information ; and in the evening I dined with the Duke of Richmond and Sir Stafford Northcote at the Carlton. The next day I went to Silver, the outfitter, in Cornhill, and procured what I wanted for the expedition, which did not include either a six-shooter or bowie-knife ; the latter, in fact, had quite gone out of fashion as an article of dress in the United States. I also called on Sir John MacDonald (in Dover Street), the Prime Minister of Canada. His likeness to Disraeli in features was very remarkable. On Saturday I had an interview with Lord Spencer at Northampton, and talked over my visit to America with him. On Monday I went all over the farm with my wife on her new black pony, and at 10.40 a.m. the next day I parted with her on the bridge over the railway at Brixworth station, and started for America. Read joined me at Bletchley station, and we got on board the Inman liner, *City of Montreal*, at Liverpool, at a quarter to four that afternoon.

On the last day of November, a Sunday, at Washington, I was attacked sharply with acute rheumatism, but I went to church, and afterwards walked about on the sunny side of the street, but getting lamer every step. On returning, the pain was so severe that I fainted, falling on a new ribbed Brussels carpet, which cut my temples open like a smith's rasp. However, as I had an

introduction to General Sherman, whose dogged valour I had read about and admired, as well as the inspiring music of his "March to the South," I determined, come what might, to carry out the visit on the next morning, Monday. I was introduced to him in his office, and on entering it with my disfigured face I said I had not been drunk or fighting, though for fighting I should like to have been with him in the south. He gave me a hearty shake of the hand, and asked, as he heard I had been over so much of his country, whether I had been into the Yellowstone Park. As I had not, he said I must go back and see it before returning. I told him that was out of the question ; I hoped to be in England by Christmas Day. "Well, then," he said, "as that is so, I will show you what it is like," and he took from a bureau sheet after sheet of large water-colours of the park, saying that, bright and vivid as they were, the actual colouring in the park of the spots they represented was higher and brighter. How true this was, I learned some three years afterwards, on visiting the places myself. He was a weather-beaten, humorous-looking, though severe warrior. I fancied there was something about him like William Edward Forster ; possibly it was the air of resolution and honesty which, in my judgment, distinguished them both.

After our interview, during which I was in great pain, I returned to bed, and did not leave the room till we took the train to New York, and on December 10 I was carried on board the Cunarder. She was a small vessel, as full, the captain told me, of freight as an egg. The passage was not a smooth one, and the weight of the bed-clothes even caused me much suffering. The doctor was a Scotchman, constantly "tasting." His remedies did no good ; the steward told me I was taking doses out of

each of the bottles in his dispensary in a regular rota, and that if none did me good the doctor would in the end mix them all together as a last resort. A fellow-passenger, American, also rheumatic and crippled, crept in to advise me to try a "cocktail," as he was doing, made up of champagne and brandy. He, however, never paid me a second visit, and at Liverpool I saw him carried ashore, a bundle of blue dressing-gown and scarlet slippers, on a sailor's back in a drizzling rain. Having announced my intention of not being carried ashore, many of the ship's company stood on deck to see how I would leave the ship, which I managed by putting my swollen arms round the necks of two stewards, and so shuffling away. They rolled me up on the floor of a cab, and away I went to the Midland station. It was Sunday, and no trains going south till night. I told the stationmaster I was certain Mr. Allport, the General Manager, would help me forward if they would let him know of the fix I was in. "He is dead," was the remark made. Then I said, "Send to Mr. John Torr, the member for Liverpool; he will come and assist me." "He is dead," was again repeated. However, after an hour or so of misery, arrangements were made for stopping some expresses, and in the evening of the shortest day of the year we heard the bells ringing for service as I and Read passed the village church, and I was lifted into bed in my own house, where I lay for several weeks in pain and in continued danger of my life. Milk more than medicine saved it. I urged the local doctor to give me salicylic acid, but he steadfastly refused, and on my desiring to know why he was so obstinate, he excused himself by saying he had tried it on five patients, and killed four of them. At last, after some weeks of restless nights lying

on my back, I turned over in a doze on my right side, fell fast asleep for several hours, and woke a convalescent. In all, upon these my first American experiences, I had travelled 16,000 miles right on end, encountering two winters within four months, with spells of summer heat intervening, but on the whole in favourable weather, and with no accidents or misfortune. Pain and sickness did not come till I was on the point of returning, and after that nature let sleep "knit up the ravelled sleeve of care," and sent me on my way rejoicing. Nothing could exceed the kindness of Read and the care he took of me when helpless with fever and pain. I feel I must have been a great trial to him, but he bore with me bravely and patiently to the end.

I began the year 1880 in bed with rheumatic fever, with very little or no change for the better until January 10, when I had a good sleep at night; after which, recovery began, but I hardly got out of the house before the 26th. All my neighbours far and near were most kind in calling to inquire. On February 9 I went up to London, and was in the House of Commons. Members from both sides were wonderfully kind in their inquiries and in wishing me speedy recovery. I began now to talk over our American report with C. S. Read, and to attend meetings of the Royal Commission on City Parochial Charities, and to make arrangements for the coming General Election.

On March 2 I spoke in the House in debate on a Game Bill, and afterwards was "teller" with Sir William Harcourt. On March 8 the Dissolution of Parliament was announced, and at once I was engaged in a contest for my seat, T. T. Paget being the Radical candidate. On February 12 I signed the Report of the

City Parochial Charities Commission I also saw the Duke of Richmond, and told him that the report of C. S. Read and myself must stand over for election matters. At Northampton market some farmers told me they would not vote for Lord Burghley, as he had offended them in a speech reflecting on their style of living.

On March 15 I left my election address with my agent for publication, and on the 23rd attended a political gathering of South Leicestershire and Northamptonshire electors at Market Harborough. I spoke in the Corn Exchange, so did Lord Burghley and Sackville, but Robert Spencer from a wagonette in the street. I went to hear him. The contrast between the little aristocrat-dandy and the audience was very amusing, but he played his part well. As he was assuring the cheering mob of his devotion to "Progress," the horse started on and jerked him nearly on his back. He saved himself, however, and explained this was not the sort of progress he advocated, not progress backwards.

Without loss of time I spoke in the principal towns of the division, and in the midst of it all our old servant, Mrs. Butlin, died. She was one of the first and best of servants when we came to live at Hazelbeech. After ten days', bar Sundays, continuous speaking, the nominations took place on April 2, and the next day I went to London to vote for George Hamilton and Coope, candidates for Middlesex, when Labouchere and Bradlaugh were returned for Northampton. The 7th was my polling day, and on the 8th I found myself returned M.P. for South Leicestershire, but my colleague, W. Heygate, was unseated by T. T. Paget.

This year our rector, William Bury, decided to pull down the frightful modern chancel, and replace

it with one in better taste and more worthy of the church.

On April 19 I was one of a large party meeting at Bridgewater House, where Lord Beaconsfield declared his intention of continuing to lead the party ; we met at 3 and left at 5.50. He spoke for an hour and a half, and advised our voting with the Government when their policy or measures were opposed by the revolutionary party, and added that the reconstruction of party organisation would be entrusted to a committee of five, chosen from Lords and Commons, with W. H. Smith at their head. The next day I went to W. H. Smith in Charles Street, and on with him to Lord Sandon, where Lord George Hamilton met us, and we discussed the proposed Education Act Amendment Bill, and I made suggestions which were left to be discussed by the ex-Cabinet.

On June 4 C. S. Read and I delivered the greater part of our American Report to the printers. I was much interested in the question of the Hare and Rabbit Bill, desiring to strike them out of the game list, and give hares a close time. On the 18th I dined with W. E. Forster, and thought him uneasy about Ireland. On the 23rd there was a scene in the House, and debate over Bradlaugh, who in the end was locked up in the clock tower. I was quite prepared to resist his admission as long as he refused to take the oath, which, in my hearing, he stated he did, because " the oath had no binding effect on him." He was willing and offered to affirm, but the orders of the House did not authorise affirmation in such a case. Upon this he professed his readiness to take the oath, whereupon I resolved to do my best to exclude him. On July 8 I moved a resolution on Compensation to Tenants (Ireland) Bill. Albert Grey seconded me (two

Alberts in the field together), and we came within fifty-five of the Government votes on the division. On the 9th C. S. Read and I revised the proof of our American report, which was delivered as soon as printed.

On July 21 I met at Dunvegan Castle, Magee (Peterborough) and his daughter. I always mixed the Bishop's "materials" for him after dinner. I understood the proportions, and then his wit would pour out. He gave us a version of "The Irishman's Dream," a story told first, I believe, by a very serious person, who would have been glad to disavow it, but its intrinsic wit and its recitation by such humourists as Magee have given it a certain immortality. "I dreamt that I dined with the Pope—excellent fish and mate, and the wine was good; and his Holiness said, 'Maybe, Mr. O'Shaughnessy, you would be taking whiskey with your dessert, and I said, 'If it pleases your Holiness, and your Holiness prefers it, I *would* take whiskey.' And his Holiness replied that he preferred such whiskey as he had in his cellars to any wine that was ever under cork. It was suprame whiskey, and above proof. So we decided to take whiskey, and his Holiness asked me whether I would take it with *hot* water or with cold, and I said, 'If your Holiness is of the same mind, I will take it hot,' and his Holiness commanded the butler to fetch hot water, but the servant was that time about it, that I awoke from my drame, and by the powers, I wish now I had said I would take it cold on the spot."

On October 27, 1880, my mother's first cousin Louie MacLeod of MacLeod died. She was a marvellously handsome woman, and MacLeod was as good-looking. I heard that when the two danced a reel at the Queen's

Ball it created quite a sensation. I was very fond of them both : always kind to me.

On January 25, 1881, I was at an "Irish" sitting of the House till seven o'clock the next morning. On January 31 the House sat again all night, and so it did the following day and night, so I did not get to bed till five o'clock on the morning of February 2. On the 3rd I attended a meeting at Lord Beaconsfield's house, No. 19, Curzon Street, to consider Mr. Gladstone's resolutions, upon which Lord Beaconsfield gave us advice. On the 10th I dined with Sir William Harcourt. He said he would try to find half a dozen as good Radicals as myself to meet me. We had a delightful party, and very amusing, with Sir Wilfrid Lawson sitting next me.

At this period I was strenuously opposing the progress of the Rivers Conservancy and Floods Bill, and ultimately succeeded in putting an end to that inequitable measure. My objections are more fully given in the following letter addressed to the Leicestershire Committee of Agriculture.

LEICESTERSHIRE COMMITTEE OF AGRICULTURE

"LONDON, *February* 11, 1881.

"DEAR SIR,—I shall be detained in London to-morrow by a meeting of the Commission on the City Companies, or I should have made a point of attending the discussion on the Rivers Flood Bill. As I am unable to be present, perhaps you will allow me to express in writing how earnestly I hope the meeting will not, without full discussion, adopt the view of levying rates over large areas for the benefit of small ones. We have daily experience of its effects in the costly and careless ap-

plication of Poor Law funds under the Union Rating Acts. Here, however, it may be said that the general benefit of the poor was in contemplation and concerned. This is not, however, pretended in the case in point. The benefit expected to come from funds raised over the whole catchment basin of a stream is to be confined to a very small strip—viz. the meadows and towns on its banks. It may be expected that we shall thus set in motion the ambition of enthusiastic theorists, dealing with funds not furnished in any due proportion by themselves, and calling into existence the extravagant and costly schemes of second-rate engineers, with the accompanying host of medical officers of health and legal advisers. It is bad enough already for our fields and farms to be taxed under the sanitary laws for the construction of sewers to house property. The injustice has at last forced itself upon the convictions of the country people, and is checking the otherwise desirable action of the rural sanitary authorities in works which in the hands of house owners would be made remunerative. I hope it is not too late to insist on the adoption of more modest proposals for the improvement of our watercourses; that the districts rated will be those only which are benefited in income, and as small as is consistent with carrying out the objects of legislation. The removal of a few mill-dams and weirs, razing of the sharp bends of the bank, the removal of osier beds, quick hedges, and obstructive trees and shoals, the regular ‘roading’ of weeds in summer, and ‘feying’ out the mud in the autumn, will, in ordinary seasons, give all the relief that is needed. In extraordinary times of rain, such as we are now having, and have for two years suffered from, I fear we must submit to some inconvenience

or loss ; but it is not all loss to the valleys ; a good winter flood brings wealth with it to the lowlands, and in some measure compensates for a periodic loss of the hay crop. In conclusion, I would say the times just now are not such, I must confess, as encourage us to launch out into any expense, whether charged on the rates or not, beyond that absolutely needed to remove obvious causes of mischief without large expenditure, and I would add that if anything of this nature is to be done at the cost of the rates, then, in my judgment, the rates should be levied exclusively on the owners and not on the occupiers of the land.

“I am, yours faithfully,

“ALBERT PELL.”

June 30, 1881, I got up to London by 5.15. Went to the House of Commons and dined with Lord Overstone, who says that Sir Robert Peel told him he believed the Irish would ultimately obtain Home Rule. Lord Overstone also told me he believed the relief given after the Irish famine of 1847 did harm, and not good. On July 2 I went with others by a special train to the Channel Tunnel Works at Dover. Nearly 800 yards had been bored by Beaumont's machine driven by compressed air. It was my friend Rowland Winn's party, franked by Sir Edward Watkin, who gave us an excellent lunch at the Warden Hotel. All this was very interesting, but I am not for completing the job. With the tunnel finished, to whose care is the key to be entrusted at this end? Not to Gladstone's, I pray, or to Parnell's.

On Monday, August 1, my opposition to the Conservancy of Rivers and Floods Bill bore fruit, and the

Bill was withdrawn. It was an iniquitous measure, imposing a tax on the high lands for works on the rivers where floods were generally caused by mill-dams and the neglect of riparian owners to cleanse and straighten the water-courses.

August 16, 1881, I went to London to a board meeting, and afterwards to the Charity Organisation Society's rooms in the Commercial Road to meet Crowder, and with him to visit the worst courts in St. George-in-the-East. Some we found in sad condition. The pavement in one was covered three inches deep all over with sewage filth, to the discredit of the vestry, the sanitary authority. In one poor house I asked if I might taste any milk they had by them, and found it good and "whole"; at the next it was very poor and inferior. On asking the tenant how this difference was, she said the neighbour belonged to Mr. X.'s "walk," but her house was on Mr. Y.'s "walk," and she must take what he supplied. I fancy she had to submit because she was in debt to Mr. Y.

On February 14, 1882, in the House of Commons I brought in my Vagrancy Bill. On the following day at the Mansion House I spoke at Lady Bective's "British Wool Manufactures" meeting, following Lord Salisbury; and then dined with Right Hon. W. E. Forster, who agrees that the Irish people have not shown courage in resisting outrages.

On Monday, April 3, 1882, I read a paper on Arthur Young at the Farmers' Club. John Bright got hold of a report of this in some newspaper, and he and Wm. Fowler, M.P. for Cambridge, pressed me to write a Life of Arthur Young, for the publishing of which they would contribute funds; but I dared not attempt it, though I

wrote a longer memoir of him for the journal of the Royal Agricultural Society.*

On April 22, 1882, came the first swallow, and I sold my wheat at Northampton at 48s. a quarter, and black oats at 1s. a stone. On the 24th, the cuckoo.

William Harcourt telling me, that if I would consent, he would give me something to keep me quiet for a year or two, put me on the Royal Commission on City Guilds. This led to many invitations to City dinners. I may here say that I made a stout stand for the preservation of hospitable feasts in the Halls of the Companies.

On May 2 in the House of Commons we had a ministerial statement. My friend W. E. Forster resigned, and Lord Spencer went to Ireland. Things there were in a pretty mess. At a party meeting at the Carlton (S. Northcote in the chair), we agreed to Sir M. Hicks-Beach's notice of motion for immediate discussion of Irish affairs.

That night in a corridor of the House of Commons I met Lord Frederick Cavendish, just appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, and to start there at once. I wished him a hearty goodbye, reminding him, though of different politics, what agreement there was between us on some subjects, especially Poor Law administration, and now we were to see no more of each other. "Oh dear, no!" he said. "I will be back on Monday," throwing his long fair hair off his forehead, as was his habit. On Sunday morning, however, at Hazelbeeche I got the news of his murder, and that of Mr. Burke, at Dublin, in the Phoenix Park. Lord Spencer actually saw the tragedy at a distance

* "Arthur Young," by Albert Pell. *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society*, part I. of Vol. IV. 3rd series. March 31, 1893.

from a window in the castle. On the 11th another Coercion Bill for Ireland was brought in and read the first time. My contempt for Gladstone grew apace.

On Saturday, the 13th, the big bell for St. Paul's on its road to London went through Lamport at twelve o'clock. I and my wife drove off to see it drawn on a "boiler" trolley by a traction-engine; another engine followed, drawing the men's hut, and as an auxiliary in the event of difficulties.

When on our yearly excursion to the Lakes this year I slipped on an inclined slab, and shot down, feet first, to its sharp edge, of which, however, I kept my head clear, and went over like an avalanche; before reaching the ground below, I revolved twice like a rifle bullet, but came down only shaken. W. Bury was distracted with laughter and fear, and assured me if I had made another turn "I should have hummed" like a top.

On Tuesday, the 8th, I got the second reading of my Vagrancy Bill, which afterwards became law; and the next day, while asleep on one of the benches in the House, behind the Speaker's chair, I was seized with a fainting fit. I contrived to get into the division lobby, where I fairly "went off." When I came-to, I found Rowland Winn and Harry Chaplin sitting by me, and Chaplin exhorting Winn to send for a doctor, to which Winn was exclaiming, "Leave him alone!—leave him alone! He won't stand a doctor, he'll ask for a lobster directly." However, they got me to my lodgings in Cleveland Row. There I found that if I leaned my head on one side over my left shoulder, I fainted away at once, and much the same result came from lying on my left side. So

I anchored myself in bed on my right side by clutching hold with my left hand of the brass rail above the pillow. As I wished to vote in nine divisions the next day, I did not go home till Saturday, when Mr. Hedley, the doctor, came. As he asked me to tell him what was the matter, I sat on the sofa, placing him in a chair opposite ; then leaning my head to the left, I was " gone " in no time. On examination, he said my heart was " curious," but with no disease. It was some weeks before I was all right.

On December 23, 1882, I sailed to the United States on the affairs of a cattle company, and drew up a report which induced the directors to rescind a contract which they had entered into for the purchase of a ranche in Colorado. On February 4, 1883, I was back in England.*

The following remarks, reprinted from *The Farmer and the Chamber of Agriculture Journal* of December 15, 1883, record my settled convictions on the subject of Free Trade. The motion by Mr. C. S. Read, M.P., was : That the Central Chamber of Agriculture, believing that the long depression of agriculture injuriously affects other industries, is of opinion that a Parliamentary Committee should forthwith inquire into the causes of this general depression, and recommend such practical steps as may be deemed desirable. Thereupon Mr. T. Carrington Smith moved the following amendment : That the proposed inquiry is undesirable, inasmuch as it would encourage farmers to expect such legislative action as, in the opinion of the Chamber, is impracticable.

* On August 18, 1883, Mr. Pell again visited the United States to witness the junction of the two sections of the Northern Pacific Railroad, the one from the east and the other from the west.

MR. PELL, M.P., said: I think that I may join with my friend Mr. Carrington Smith in the regret that he has expressed that in supporting the amendment we should be placed in a position not entirely in harmony with the bulk of those whom I am now addressing. Nevertheless, I cannot let the opportunity go by, as we have been summoned to consider the question of Free Trade and Protection—"No, no"—because that is really what it is. We have been summoned to consider that question, and I cannot allow the opportunity to go by without uttering a few remarks upon the subject. My friend Mr. Clare Sewell Read, who moved the motion for the inquiry by a Parliamentary Committee, said he did not know that any good would come from it.

MR. READ.—No.

MR. PELL.—He says "No." Then I misunderstood him. At all events, I think we may say this—that he did not point out in precise terms what good we might expect to come from it. With his usual ability and his extremely good debating powers, he made a very fair case for the resolution. He told us that all great changes in legislation or in Parliamentary action had been preceded by inquiry. I believe that to be true, but it has been inquiry with a definite object. It has been perfectly well known, when the inquiry was made, what those who urged it were aiming at. Now, it has not been made clear to us on this occasion. It has been suggested that the desire of those who are urging this inquiry is to get something in the nature of protection for agriculture. The last speaker told us just now that we Free Traders in England are the laughing-stock of other nations. Well, then, I will say in answer to that, according to the old proverb, "Let those laugh who win." (Hear,

hear, and ironical cheers.) I am to understand by those cheers that England has not been a winning nation in the great run which she has had since the year 1846. I will not stop to discuss that question. Let anybody walk out into the Strand or into the country, or let anybody travel (as I do) third class from one end of the kingdom to the other and answer this question: Whether or not the people are not happier and in a better condition than they were when I was a boy? But, sir, I have another thing to say. I remember those old debates on Free Trade and Protection when I was young, and I well remember what it was that converted me to my present belief, that the arguments used for Protection were as bad as it was possible for them to be. I remember it being asserted by those who were supporting Protection at that time and opposing Free Trade that you would have wheat down to 20s. a quarter. Well, I fancy that that argument was the worst in the world that they could make use of, because there is nothing that the people would like better than to have wheat down to 10s. I do not think that we need enter into that now, but what I have to address my remarks to is the question, What is this inquiry meant for? Can it tell us farmers anything more than we know now?—that we have the greatest difficulty in making the two ends meet. That, just now, is on arable farms out of the question. Like my friend Mr. Read—and he knows it perfectly well—I have farmed and am farming a good deal of arable land. It is in Cambridgeshire, one of those counties which have been very hard hit indeed by the low price of grain, and I cannot admit that this good season which we have had has got us out of our difficulties in any way whatever. In fact, we do not have the sympathy

which we had last year, because the people say, "If you are not making money, you ought to be making it." They forget that at the present moment really good, excellent wheat is selling in Cambridge market for 29s. a quarter. My sufferings are not therefore theoretical; but I want to know what the proposers of the resolution expect to get out of this inquiry? When the Committee is drafted, who are they going to put on it, and with what object are the members going to serve on the Committee? Is it merely for inquiry? Can any Committee tell us more about the subject than we know ourselves—we, in this room, who are farmers and land-owners? Is any gentleman going to get up and point out what the Committee is to suggest? I am glad to hear that many in this room endorse the views which I hold, that we have very good reason to believe that we may get rid of some of the unfair taxation which is imposed upon us. But you will weaken the demand for the remedy and postpone the remedy if you interpose an inquiry by Parliament as to whether there may not be some better way of improving our condition. I believe—and I think that my friend Mr. Read will believe—that we shall get nothing which will improve our position out of a Parliamentary inquiry. It is impossible, and it is perfectly ridiculous to suppose that this country is going to submit for one moment to any taxes on human food. It is absolutely ridiculous. Why, I myself would join with the thousands of my poorer fellow-creatures in resisting any such attempt. Then some people say, "Oh! but let us see if a Parliamentary inquiry will not enable you to put a duty on grain which will raise the price and thereby improve the farmer's position, and at the same time not raise

the price of bread." Well, suggestions of that sort are really unworthy of members of this Chamber of Agriculture. Then, sir, what is to come of the inquiry after all? Nothing but a moan, nothing but an appeal to unsympathetic millions who do not care twopence really whether you win or lose by your farming, provided they get their food good and cheap. And can we blame them for it? I have said nothing about the improved prospects of agriculture. I try my best. I go in for milk. I do not go in for cheese, but I go in for those other alternative methods of making money if I can. I have not succeeded yet—(laughter)—but I have not given up wheat-growing. I have sown just as much in Cambridgeshire as ever before. I have sown less in the midland counties, but I believe that in the fine, deep land in the eastern counties we still have an inducement to grow wheat. One other point before I sit down. Though there was a murmur of disapproval at the statement made by Mr. Carrington Smith with regard to laying down the land for grass, I thought the suggestion a very wise one. Sir John Bennet Lawes has laid down very clearly and with great truth that the devotion of land to grass is succeeded by an accumulation of ammonia and the elements of fertility in the form of a sort of savings bank which belongs to the landlord, and this is available at a year's notice when you like to break the land up again. If the thing is to be argued out, I do not think we should omit that. We are not yet blockaded; but I believe that if we were, we should then have a reserve of power to produce grain which we should not now possess when the country is arable. I rejoice that I have had an opportunity of avowing my old Free Trade principles on this occasion.

In 1885 I retired from Parliament, and let the constituency know of my intention in January. The following letter, in which I confirmed my expressed intention not to seek re-election, gave me a further opportunity of testifying my belief as to the futility of proposals for a return to Protection.

To Mr. C. B. Lowe, who had written to me, to ask whether a newspaper report, that I would stand for the Market Harborough division, was correct, I replied in the following letter :

“DEAR MR. LOWE,—In reply to your note about the newspaper report, I have never given the slightest intimation of an intention to offer myself as a candidate for any one of the new seats. It is not for me to place myself in such a position without an invitation to do so.

“I think it right to add that, having heard a good deal lately of a desire among some of my friends to re-impose import duties on food and other articles of commerce, I must frankly say that whether that proposal is disguised under the misleading title of Fair Trade or avowed under that of Protection, it will have no support from me. Beyond question our country has, on the whole, prospered greatly with Free Trade, and thousands have thus been raised from distress and despair to a state of independence and comfort. It is true that an unnatural depression of agriculture, in some of its branches, is troubling many of us—myself among the number—sorely ; still, to my mind, this is tolerable in comparison to the evils which afflicted our country when statesmen interrupted, and so discouraged the free admission of foreign goods, in exchange for the products of English industry.

“ You are quite at liberty to make any use you like of this letter ; and believe me,

“ Yours very truly,

“ ALBERT PELL.”

“ HAZELBEECH, *January 18, 1885.*”

My parliamentary career came to an end in the autumn of 1885, when I retired and devoted myself more than ever to the business and pleasures of country life, varied with the extremely dissimilar exercise of my duties in the east of London, and with serving on Royal Commissions. Several of my best political friends retired at the same time, with whom it has been pleasant now and again to revive memories at the Carlton Club. My constituents gave me a splendid testimonial of their esteem in the form of a very fine silver-gilt cup and cover of Early Victorian date, together with some handsome silver plate. I was indeed as well treated as I had been supported and trusted. Rest, however, was very delightful, and I had enough of quiet duties to fulfil to save me from snoring away my life in an armchair.



MEMORIAL TABLET IN HAZELBEECH CHURCH

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I

THE MAKING OF THE LAND IN ENGLAND

By ALBERT PELL

From the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, Second Series, Vol. XXIII. Part II. 1887; Third Series, Vol. X. Part I. 1899.

PREFATORY NOTE BY THE SECRETARY OF THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF ENGLAND

THE cases referred to by Mr. Albert Pell in the following valuable historical paper are cited by him as illustrations of his general thesis that "the hardships and exertions of those who, for all historical time, have been making the land are ignored, the result unappreciated, and vague notions of appropriation justified by referring the present value of land to what is termed its unearned increment." This modern value, he argues, can, "in purely rural districts, be directly traced to the expenditure by land-owners for years of energy and money, the capital sum of which, when taken into account, may possibly be found to exceed the market value of the estates on which it has been expended."

All the instances of landlords' expenditure given by Mr. Pell, with the exception of the last ("Grundy Fen"), are contained in his paper contributed to the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England in the autumn of 1887 (vol. xxiii., 2nd series, 1887, pp. 355-374).

No attempt has been made to bring up to date the statistics there given; but the publication in the Journal in the spring of the present year of a *Second Retrospect* by Mr. Pell (3rd series,

vol. x., 1899, pp. 136-141) appears to render appropriate the republication of his original article, with the added facts as to another estate which he has now adduced in support of his contention that "the ameliorating changes in the land have been advanced, not by the silent operations and development of nature, or by the natural increment of value, but by the dogged effort which the landowner, as a rule, has ever put forth in the making of the land, and at any cost fitting it for the practice of improved husbandry suited to the progress of civilisation and the modern wants of the people."

ERNEST CLARKE.

JUNE, 1899.

THE MAKING OF THE LAND IN ENGLAND

A RETROSPECT

It is a common observation that the earth belongs to the race. The possession of land is thus regarded as a boon, the title to which is of a nature entirely different from that upon which the ownership of other property depends.

Raw land is, however, only a chance to prosecute the struggle for existence, and those who try to earn a living by the subjugation of raw land, find that they make the attempt under most unfavourable conditions, for land can be "made" or brought into use only by great hardship and exertion.

Men are too frequently blind to the difference between land in a state of nature and as they now find it presented to their eyes in an old and settled country such as ours, and so lose sight of the fact that the real boon or gift which so many covet is to get some land, after somebody else has made it fit for use. In the absence of information, the hardships and exertions of those who, for all historical time, have been making the land are ignored, the result unappreciated, and vague notions of appropriation justified by referring the present value of land to what is termed its "unearned increment."

The difference, however, between man in the prehistoric age and man in the Victorian age is not more marked than that between the condition of the land in the former and in the later period; nor are the struggle and the sacrifice, through many ages, undergone in the civilisation of the one, any more real than those involved in the reformation and improvement of the other.

The present moment, with the rent of agricultural land in England declining under the competition of America and India, is not well chosen for attacking the supposed advantage land-

owners enjoy : rather it seems a most suitable season for inquiry, not of a political but of a practical kind, into the causes of the modern value, so as to ascertain whether or no it really depends upon the extraneous influence of the surrounding capital and labour of an industrious and populous society. No doubt such an influence is in operation, and has in some instances an appreciable effect ; but the case of the landowner and agriculturist is, that in purely rural districts this modern value can be directly traced to the expenditure for years of energy and money on the subject-matter itself by its owners, the capital sum of which when taken into account may possibly be found to exceed the market-value of the estates on which it has been expended.

This view of the case is put forth and supported by a distinguished American writer,* who seems to have anticipated, in the assertion of this claim on behalf of the State, a serious check to the employment of private labour and capital in the subjugation of the prairie and the forest by those whose title to such land is based on a patent from the Federal Government, coupled with industrial occupation.

We in England are at the present day but the heirs or successors to others, who, whether they derived their original title in the wilderness and waste by patent, grant, conquest, diplomacy, or communal inheritance, generally got nothing, apart from wild animals and minerals, for the expenditure of toil and capital in the development of their acquisition, but the chance of remuneration. Any one who will look, for instance, into the history of the " making of the land " in the great level of the fens in the time of the Stuarts, will learn that the chance of remuneration was then anything but a good one for the adventurers and pioneers on those great and useful works.

Some of us have been eye-witnesses of the nature and extent of the warfare of human industry against natural obstacles in the New World, of which Great Britain in recent years has furnished only occasional examples. Possibly ninety-nine out of every hundred of the present inhabitants of England can form no conception of the character and severity of this struggle, and it may not be out of place to reproduce a picture of it

* Professor Sumner of Yale College.

as drawn by De Tocqueville from personal observation. He says :

The bells round the necks of the cattle announced our reproach to a "clearing" when we were yet a long way off, and we soon afterwards heard the stroke of the hatchet hewing down the trees of the forest. As we came nearer, traces of destruction marked the presence of civilised man ; the road was strewn with shattered boughs ; trunks of trees half consumed by fire, or cleft by the wedge, were still standing in the track we were following.

Beyond a field, at present imperfectly traced out, we suddenly came upon the cabin of its owner, situated in the centre of a plot of ground more carefully cultivated than the rest, but where man was still waging unequal warfare with the forest ; there the trees were cut down, but their roots were not removed, and the trunks still encumbered the ground they had so recently shaded.

The master of the dwelling belongs to that restless, calculating, and adventurous race of men who do with the utmost coolness things only to be accounted for by the ardour of the passions, and who endure the life of savages for a time in order to conquer and civilise the backwoods. By the side of the hearth sits a woman with a baby on her lap ; her delicate limbs appear shrunken, her features are drawn in, her children are the true children of the wilderness, full of turbulence and energy. She watches them from time to time with mingled melancholy and joy. To look at their strength and her languor, one might imagine that the life she has given them has exhausted her own, and still she regrets not what they have cost her. In the one chamber of which the house consists the whole family is gathered for the night.

The dwelling itself is a little world—an ark of civilisation amid an ocean of foliage ; a hundred steps beyond it the primeval forest spreads its shades, and solitude resumes its sway.*

Our English ancestors have undergone at home the same toil and privations in their conflicts with Nature. The wolf had to be extirpated before the flock could be safely established ; the forest had to be cleared before the open field could be set out ; the great river to be embanked before the flood could be restrained, and the fen made only summer land. This, however, was but a first approach towards cultivation.

The communal occupation of this virgin soil soon came under the necessity of regulation and order, to become of any real

* De Tocqueville's "History of Democracy in America,"

service to an advancing and growing population not content to remain savages. The commonable lands had to be set out in strips with owners' rights, not yet indeed complete, but sufficiently appropriated to allow of some private enterprise in the growth of grain. The manor-house, the church, and the homesteads appeared on the scene, shelter for cattle was provided in winter, and the breeds improved. With buildings and arable husbandry and winter shelter came the need for bridges, ferries, roads passable in summer—unserviceable, indeed, in winter, but, such as they were, constructed and maintained solely by those who had subjugated and brought into cultivation the soil over which they passed.

People now living may have seen decaying under the walls of a parish church the enormous wooden plough, girt and stayed with iron, which, as spring approached, was annually furbished up and brought into the village street. For this the owners or their tenants, acting in concert, made up joint teams of six or eight powerful horses, and proceeded to the restoration of their highways, by ploughing them up, casting the furrows towards the centre, and then harrowing them down to a fairly level surface for the summer traffic. They have lived to see the same highways first and for years mended with weak and rotten sand and gravel, and finally hardened and rendered water-proof, with granite, transported fifty miles or more for that purpose.

Progress, however, was stayed by the exercise of the remaining communal rights, and a further step was taken by the owners to allot among themselves in severalty that which hitherto they had enjoyed in common, and to free their cultivated lands from the customary right exercised by sheep-masters and the owners of commonable cattle and animals, as well as the otherwise incurable evil of a prescriptive course of cropping which rendered the provision of sufficient winter food an impossibility. At an enormous expense this last great step towards efficient tillage and grazing was carried out with the sanction of Parliament, and the way was clear for the erection of suitable homesteads, no longer huddled in the villages, but placed in the newly set out freeholds, and for the complete removal of the superfluous water by open ditches and under-drains. The English landowner was not slow to make use of the opportunity now given for laying the

soil dry, and for sheltering and subdividing his cattle by enclosures fenced off by hedges or stone walls, and the cost value of the made land of the empire was speedily raised by the enormous expenditure on these works.

There are other subsidiary and local improvements that must not be overlooked, such as warping, claying, marling, pumping from low levels, all of which operations have necessitated an outlay of capital, and a periodical charge for renewal, without which the soil would be entirely unfitted for modern husbandry. There is, it may be broadly asserted, but a small portion of rural England the present value of which is not due wholly or in a very large part to the costly operations to which reference has been made, and which have been conducted wholly at the charge of the successive owners of the soil.

In the twenty-fourth volume of the First Series of the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society Mr. Belcher has drawn a remarkably clear picture of what remains to be done after the forest trees of wild land have been removed. Speaking of Wychwood Forest, then recently grubbed up, he says :

The land, when given into the hands of the new tenants, presented anything but a smooth, inviting appearance. Wide ditches, and long irregular high banks that had formed the boundaries of the different coppices ; deep pits and hollows, where stones had been dug for the use of bygone generations ; small straggling briars that had escaped the notice of the wood-grubbers ; roots of trees and underwood left a few inches below the surface ; large patches of rough brown fern stems that had afforded cover to the fawns ;—all these and many other impediments stood in the way of the “ forest farmers,” and made “ speed the plough ” an earnest desire with the ploughman, but seldom realised ; for it was with the greatest difficulty that four strong horses drawing a large iron plough could break up half an acre a day, and many and long were the blacksmiths’ bills for repairs to the tackle where the plough was used in breaking up the soil. Some of the tenants tried digging at a cost of £3 per acre ; some used stocking hoes and grubbed the ground five inches deep, carefully picking out the large stones that were beneath the surface : this plan cost 50s. per acre.*

These operations, however, laborious and costly as they proved

* *R.A.S.E. Journal*, vol. xxiv., 1863, p. 281.

to be, left the land but poorly prepared and wholly unfurnished for farming operations, unless the surface had been there and then sown down in one prairie to grass, for which it would have even then required some such previous operation as breast-ploughing, at the cost of about 23s. an acre. For the growth of grass and winter food, for local traffic, for the shelter of man and beast, the owner had further to provide roads fenced in with boundary-walls, or quick-fencing taking five years at the least of careful nursing and effectual protection to rear and establish.

Farmhouses, cottages, wash-pits, cattle-pens, waterings, plantations, and gardens had further to be provided. The highways would come to £700 per mile, the occupation roads to about half that sum. The two boundary-walls would come to £200 per mile, or, if the fencing was done with quick, to a little larger sum. At least that was the case in the reclamation of Wychwood Forest. There still remained the first thorough draining of the new fields to be executed, at a cost to the owner of from five to seven pounds an acre.

There is no operation brought into this statement which it has not been incumbent on the owner to execute on the soils of England in general cultivation. The chalk downs stand in a category by themselves, to which these remarks would not apply. The sands and gravels would not require under-draining, but their texture would on the other hand require strengthening and cooling by the expensive process of marling or chalking.

Wychwood Forest, as we have seen, furnishes an instance of the subjugation of wild land and its conversion to a condition fit for all the purposes of modern husbandry within the present generation. Processes which have been slowly worked out during centuries were here undertaken and completed in almost as many years. The English flora and fauna in all their natural fitness and beauty were violently and ruthlessly destroyed to make way for artificial grasses and cereals, the imported root-crops, and the less graceful forms of domesticated farm stock. The transformation, though costly, was complex and complete.

We will pass from the centre of England to the north, to a tract

of high land, the home of the grouse and wild-fowl at all seasons, and the outrun during summer for some hardy hill stock. The soil itself, not sour or sterile, invited the hand of a generous and wealthy improver; the climate indeed suggested caution, but even that hope held out might be ameliorated, if the ever-present cold wet in the soil could be removed, and the driving blasts and storms be broken by stone fences and shelters. Though the growth of grain and crops in rotations was admittedly out of the question, the more moderate and simpler enterprise of improving the permanent pasture by the removal of the heather, by liming and draining, seemed to offer a fair prospect of return for the outlay.

The moor in question contained 5,750 acres, for the most covered with heather, and before the improvement was excellent grouse ground. The portion improved was originally the best part of the moor, and comprises 656 acres. The reclamation was carried out about thirty years ago, and at that time the rent of the whole moor was £200 a year, or 8*d.* per acre all over; while the value of the better portion selected for reclamation might be taken to have been 1*s.* an acre. The undertaking, which extended over a period of fourteen years, consisted in draining, liming, stone-fencing, building cattle-sheds for shelter, and water-weiring, that is, protecting the banks of streams by stones or wattling:

	£	s.	d.
The draining cost	5,587	4	0
Liming	8,255	16	4
Fencing	616	7	5
Water-weiring	224	2	2
Cattle-sheds	517	4	1
Sundries	790	0	3
Total .	<u>£15,990</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>3</u>

From the above it appears that these simple operations cost no less than £24 7*s.* 6*d.* per acre. There was nothing unusual or fanciful in their character; they consisted solely in removing the superabundant water from the soil by drainage, in keeping the torrents within bounds, in sweetening and improving the pasture by lime, in enclosing with walls built

of stone found on the spot, and in erecting shelter for the animals brought on to graze. Thousands of other acres have been thus reclaimed from time to time. For some years the whole moor was kept in hand, and grazed with cattle and sheep, and in 1867 it was let as a farm at the annual rent of £800. In 1874, on a revaluation, this rent was increased to £824, the improved land being then valued at 6s. 8d. per acre. The result of the operations, therefore, financially, is an expenditure of £24 7s. 6d. an acre (more than half of which was for liming, the effect of which cannot be regarded as permanent), and an increased rental of 5s. 8d. an acre, or a little over one per cent. on the capital employed. There can be no grounds in this case for assuming that the owner has been benefited by any "natural increment of value." On the contrary, the case furnishes a very striking and useful proof of the need of caution and moderation on the part of those who might be inclined to fasten on owners a legal obligation to bring waste lands and grouse moors into cultivation.

To complete the history of this improvement, it must be added that whilst the land when covered with heather was a splendid piece of grouse moor which would now have commanded a game rent of 2s. 6d. per acre, it has been rendered valueless for that purpose: so that deducting, as is proper, this sum from the improved rent of 5s. 8d., we arrive at a net financial gain of 3s. 2d. per acre, or a return of about 13s. per annum on an expenditure of £100. If either by the unflagging zeal of the owner or, as is sometimes suggested, under State compulsion, the improved condition of the land is to be preserved, the liming, the effects of which are gradually wearing out, will have to be renewed at a cost which, with present prices of produce, hardly promises to be remunerative.

Another instance of reclamation of waste land in a northern county of England may be worth mentioning. The common comprised about 4,000 acres, one half of which was enclosed about 1881 under the authority of Parliament. The proprietor of an estate in the manor, who was favourable to this enclosure, received in respect of such estate an allotment of 113 acres of

cold moorland, growing rushes and coarse grass. At a cost of £400 this was fenced and open-drained, and the enclosure expenses discharged. The largest offer to rent this allotment has been £12. Probably at the present time it would not command £10. And as the common right prior to the enclosure was worth £5, the resulting net gain from this improvement or subjugation of the waste has been £5 per annum, or $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. on the capital applied.

It will be proper next to examine into the extent and cost of those secondary operations which a survey of the general features of the country informs us must have followed its recovery from a state of nature, and to estimate the approximate cost per acre of such operations. For this purpose examination has been made, with the aid of the 6-inch Ordnance Map, into their nature and extent in a selected parish. The one is question is in the Midland counties, remote from any considerable town, has a population less than 150, and probably never has had one of more than 200. It was enclosed in the reign of Elizabeth, being at that time for the most part open unenclosed commonable fields of arable and lammas land, some brakes of thorns and gorse, with a few old enclosures, probably not above 50 acres in extent, around the messuages, tofts, and church. The area was, and is, 1,648 acres. The surface soil is of a most varied character, some heavy clay, a small amount of gravel, more loam, and a considerable tract of red oolitic iron formation. It is extremely undulating and has been full of dangerous bogs and springs, the drainage of which has been difficult and costly, but not more so than has been the case in the surrounding parishes. To draw off the spring water many of these drains have been cut to the depth of 15 and 20 feet.

The snipe, the dotterel, and woodcock, which up to the beginning of the century were common, are now hardly ever seen. As late as 1808, private diaries show that the squire of the place spent many a night with his draw-nets and setters in taking these birds, as well as other winged and ground game, the remains of a practice that no doubt was common enough before the days of enclosure. The badger, the fox, the fowmart and mole were all placed in

the same category of destructive vermin, and the hand of man was raised without any discrimination against them. The visiting of neighbours at any distance was suspended from October to April, and the coal, which was fetched from a considerable distance, was laid down before Michaelmas. The ways and roads were then broken up by the weather and were abandoned as unfit, alike for light vehicles and heavy-draught waggons.

The surveyor's map of the Elizabethan deed shows that the proprietors divided their new allotments into eighteen large enclosures, to which were added sixteen small crofts adjoining the thirty houses of the inhabitants, whose census came probably to about one hundred and fifty souls. Forty years ago there was no hard road to the adjoining village on the south, and even now the hard road to that on the north is in places not even commenced.

The parish has ultimately been subdivided into 150 fields, now traversed by over three miles of substantial public carriage-ways, with the addition of about one mile of occupation roads, giving access from the former to the properties of several owners. The public ways were set out in the Elizabethan deed 60 feet wide; they are now reduced to 30. At this width they appropriate 33 acres of land over which the public enjoys rights of free passage, insisting at the same time on the maintenance of a hard level weather-proof track of ample width, made, preserved, and protected solely at the cost of the proprietors of the land through which they pass. The cattle of the owners of the soil are prohibited from grazing its sides, and the very hedges and trees, which might and which have afforded them shelter, have to be reduced to statutable dimensions for the convenience and enjoyment of the casual wayfarer. These desirable results, attracting so little remark, regarded as they are as matters of course, and almost the production of Nature, have been effected only at a heavy charge on the real estate of the parish. Fifteen acres at the least are entirely lost in the metalled surface of the highways, and the account for the whole of the secondary works of reclamation will stand approximately as follows :

	£
3½ miles of parish roads, at £700 per mile to make .	2,216
The two boundary fences on either side, at £200 per mile	633
The one mile of occupation road and its fences .	550
36 miles of quick fences to the 150 enclosures, at £112 per mile	4,032
200 gates and gateways to the enclosures, at 40s. .	400
1,600 acres drained at £6 6s. per acre, say .	10,000
Total . . .	<u>£7,8131</u>

But the record cannot be closed here. Roads without bridges, carriage-ways without footpaths and causeways, grazing grounds without waterings, lairs, or cattle-pens, would be regarded as incomplete. Even the prairie requires its corrals. Rights of way, allotments, orchards, buildings for the poor, and graveyards must be taken into account before the average cost value of an acre in the typical parish can be estimated.

Beyond this there remains yet one noteworthy adjunct, which from the earliest time to the present has marked and capped every advance in civilisation that has given character and value to country estates.

The owners of the soil, sometimes with enthusiasm, sometimes without, but still always somehow, have regarded the erection and maintenance of a place of public worship as a work without which their rural economy would be incomplete. To bring the expenditure on this head into the account is no fanciful or extreme stretch of the imagination, but would on reflection seem to be a solid actuarial item in the schedule of operations, by which our ancestors enhanced the value of every rood of their possessions, and which must not be overlooked in discussion with those who trace so much of the rise of income to the natural increment of value.

There will now be no difficulty in accounting for an additional expenditure of £1,600 to £2,000 on the operations necessary in the selected parish to provide the equipment for the development of modern husbandry; this will raise the cost of the secondary operations to about £20,000, a sum equal to £12 per acre. If we add £5 an acre more for the cost of such work as Mr. Belcher describes in Wychwood Forest, we get a sum of £17

per acre, and still we have not a house or homestead erected, a tree planted, a hovel raised. These particulars will be dealt with, and their importance as factors in the value of land perceived, when we come to the consideration of the actual expenditure about them on estates selected for example; but a very careful and useful estimate of their cost has been furnished by Mr. E. P. Squarey in his article on "Farm Capital," to be found in Vol. xiv. of the 2nd series of the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society (1878).

Mr. Squarey says the landlord's capital is—(1) The land. (2) The buildings, roads, cottages, fences, etc. (3) The expenditure in arterial or thorough draining, warping, chalking, marling, and other more or less permanent methods of increasing the productive capacity of the soil. It is with the second item we have now to do, and Mr. Squarey's estimates are based on the following illustrations:

A. A dairy farm of 200 acres, 15 per cent. arable; annual value, exclusive of tithe, 50s. per acre; cost of buildings, including house and two cottages, £2,550, or £12 15s. per acre.

B. Mixed arable and pasture farm, 500 acres tithe-free at 30s. per acre rent; house, farm, and six cottages, £4,000, or £8 an acre.

C. Mixed upland, arable and pasture farm of 1,000 acres, at 20s. per acre; farmhouse, buildings, and thirteen cottages, £6,350, or £6 7s. per acre.

The average in these three illustrations of the cost of buildings turns out therefore to be £9 per acre, which, added to the previous calculation of £17, brings up the amount of the owner's expenditure to the sum of £26 per acre.

For some such outlay as this, or its equivalent, at the time when the several operations were carried out, the open wild waste, denuded of saleable timber, mere rough naked land in fact, has been converted into cleared and levelled enclosures, ready for the occupancy of the cultivating farmer and his staff.

Having thus taken a view of the processes involved in the making of the land, the consequence of these operations and the further demand on the resources of those who have carried them out, in order that their efficiency should not be impaired, will have to be considered. This efficiency is maintained by renewals—renewals of operations and improvements which it is

too much the custom to regard as permanent, when no such thing as permanency has been achieved. The life of these improvements is not perpetual, that of some is actually transient. If the primary operation, such as grubbing and levelling, be excepted, which once done may be said to be done for ever, there is not one that does not become from the date of its completion the source of anxiety as to its protection and preservation, and of consequent further expenditure of capital.

The first execution of such works has all the charm of conquest surrounding it—it is greeted with the applause of admiring citizens, the successes are tabulated and advertised, the failures are never mentioned. While the field laughs with grain, it is more than possible that the owner groans at the cost of its artificial fertility, and finds too late that high farming is not the remedy for lowering prices. Too often he must feel it would have been better to have left the down unbroken, the copse ungrubbed, the gorse and heather to bloom in peace, the sullen clay undrained, the boulders where they lay on the moor and the grand homestead in the architect's office. The mention of an inspector or commissioner sends the same sort of cold thrill through him as such references would among the criminal classes, and he curses the day when modern legislation enabled him through such agencies to burden his acres with debt, and to excite at the same time the cupidity of the ignorant and unscrupulous theorists who would appropriate what shadow of net income might remain to him, under a claim on behalf of the nation to the "natural increment of value." In such cases—and there are thousands of them—there is, instead of any natural increment of value, an artificial depletion of income.

As far as our experience reaches, the efficiency of modern under-drains cannot be counted on beyond a term of fifty years : in very many cases renewal has been found necessary at the end of thirty, either from the decay of the material used, as straw, turf, or wood, the defective design of the drain tile, as was the case in the old horseshoe tile, or the small diameter of the pipe, the inroads of moles, the entrance of roots, or deposit of silt and mud. Sometimes a zeal for universal deep work in soapy clays has ended in a suffocation of the passage, and caused an early substitution of shallower channels ; sometimes the burial at the

bottom of broken stones with pipes placed on their top, sometimes the direction in which the drains were set out, frequently the distances allowed between them, have speedily terminated the useless life of the fashionable bantling, leaving a legacy of debt and a heavy charge inevitable for renewals.

The expenditure on such enterprises must not be forgotten by those who would record the cost of the subjugation of the English soil. It may be contended that money thus thrown away should not be taken into account. Be it so ; but the experience derived from such mistakes, as an asset, has its value—a very sterling one—and something on its account must be credited in estimating the capital expenditure which goes to make up the value at the present day of ordinary farm lands. It is not the building of the vessels and the pay of the crews only that make up the cost of navigating our coasts : it is increased by a charge for beacons, buoys, and lights, warning the sailors of the hidden rocks and shoals on which so many have gone to destruction. The renewals of fences, where they have been neglected, is a constant source of expense, since (even where tenderly cared for) whitethorn and blackthorn and hazel are not immortal. The perpetual clearing out and deepening of outfalls, the renewals and repairs of fen and marsh banks and dykes, the maintenance of the machinery, without which it would be flooded, are continuous and costly, coming on some of the inferior levels to an annual cost of from 4s. to 6s. an acre.

Finally, it should be noted that it is upon land which in a state of nature was of an inferior value, either from its situation or poverty, that we meet with the marked instances of an appreciation of value due, as we have seen, to the lavish expenditure of extraneous capital. Fen districts, sandy heaths, vitriolic gravels, sullen clays, stony wildernesses, furnish the standard examples of improved rentals and reduced incomes. Arthur Young described one of his improved occupations in Middlesex as the “maw of a devouring wolf,” the very reverse of the character an inexperienced observer would have bestowed on it.

One of the most successful and wealthiest men of business in the Midland counties, a very considerable landowner, whose family for a century back have been signally connected with the advancement of agriculture, told the writer in the forties that

“he could not afford to buy land at less than £90 to £100 per acre”—meaning, it may be presumed, that an income might be calculated on with certainty when the elements of fertility are in natural abundance and convertible into human food (as in the best grazing lands) without expenditure upon houses, cottages, and buildings; while in the other case, though the saleable products might be as considerable or even more so, the income they yielded was too seriously diminished by the cost of the artificial means necessary for their acquirement. This reasoning seems to be sound, for it is notorious that the rents of these fine soils covered with the best natural pastures have hardly yielded to the pressure of bad times, while rents enhanced by improvements have gone to pieces, and in many cases down to zero.

Such examples as these are, however, of very limited amount, though possibly there is not a county in England that is entirely devoid of them. They will be found for the most part in the Midlands, and on the spots where the Kimmeridge clay and green sand come to the surface, as well as in river valleys and flats which for years have had the fertilising washings of the surrounding slopes brought down upon them by the action of frost and water. But even in the finest grazing pastures in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, whatever may have been the practice fifty years ago, it would be wrong to conclude that at the present day the extraordinary richness of their grasses is due entirely to nature.

Some years ago Sir John B. Lawes commenced a scientific inquiry into the causes of the fertility and the feeding properties of the best land near Market Harborough, and for this purpose he desired to select for examination portions of fields on which no artificial food had been consumed. After long search none could be found absolutely free from this disqualification. Upon the greater portion of this magnificent district it turned out that linseed or cotton cake was in common use and in considerable quantities, dissipating the general idea that the “rother’s side is larded” solely by natural grasses. A little help no doubt goes a long way on such pastures, but the grazier has proved that it is better to give it—possibly with the view of early maturity—than to rely exclusively on what the landlords’ freehold furnishes in return for the rent.

Passing then from the cream of the English soil, we come to the considerations of some instances selected for the purpose of showing the extraordinary and unsuspected outlay which has been continuously going on in order to produce or to maintain the rent-roll of purely rural estates.

It has been found no very easy matter to arrive at the particulars, or even the sum-total of this outlay, so as to get at a statement of averages. A vast amount of the improvements of the land has been due to sentiment and not to economical calculations. Arthur Young suggests the morning stroll of the owner, and his casual and unpremeditated conception on the spot of some operation which would improve the natural features of his estate, and perhaps employ his people, as the origin of considerable outlay. Of such probably no very accurate accounts are now to be found. Much of it perhaps might be termed extravagant, and in respect of direct results, unproductive; but none can doubt that the finished charm and wealth of English scenery are traceable to such efforts, and that much of the value (the residential value certainly) of rural property has resulted from them. It is doing scant justice to our ancestors to discredit or forget their practical regard for ornament and progress as they understood it, and ungraciously ascribe its economic effects entirely to the "natural increment of value."

Fortunately, however, in some instances estate accounts have been kept and preserved in a manner sufficient to establish without doubt the contention that on a comparison of expenditure with the present capital value, much less than is thought will be found left for the prairie value of the land.

The county of Huntingdon is one essentially free from urban activity, and the local wealth which it creates. A considerable portion of it still shows traces of the forest with which it was once clothed. A large part of its north-eastern margin was very recently a fen sodden with moisture, or bright with water, skirted with reed and sedge.

The residents are the successors of a generation who were content to sow the skirts of their highlands where they dipped into the fens with no nobler grain than oats, to see them too frequently ripening so late that the practice was to leave them

standing till the water rose among them a foot or more in depth, waiting with patience till winter set in, and access to the crop was afforded on the ice. Then at last, equipped with poles and sleighs, the villagers entered on the untimely harvest, and, breaking off so much of the crop as stood above the ice, they gathered it on the sleighs and removed it to the edge of the highland for storage.

The woods are now fewer and far between; the meres are bright, not with water, but with spring green and (in the absence of blight) with autumn gold. Spacious and substantial farm-houses and buildings have replaced the decoy and the charcoal-burners' camp, while the wattle and daub hut, with its thatched roof snug and picturesque, has disappeared for a modern brick substitute, answering indeed to the idea of decency and salubrity, but at the cost of rustic beauty and some domestic comforts.

Have these striking changes brought with them a corresponding financial return for the sacrifices which have been made for their achievement? Some answer may be found on an examination of a case in point.

CONNINGTON ESTATE

The Connington estate, the property of J. M. Heathcote, Esq., in Huntingdonshire, is situated on the borders of the higher lands of the Oxford clay formation, where it descends and merges into the alluvium of the fen lands of Whittlesea and Holme. Part, therefore, is heavy clay, the poorer portion of which is or was woodland and store-grass land. The other part is light fen land, "blowing" in the dry March winds, and of a loose texture. Situated between the two is a considerable amount of mixed soil of good quality, growing good timber, and carrying heavy sheep, and excellent pasture for milk and store cattle. For eighty-seven years the proprietors, a father and son, have resided on the estate, bestowing on it all the personal care and outlay which a love of country life and a sense of duty would prompt. Without yielding to "fads" and whims, all that modern science and practice in agriculture sanctioned has been respected and made use of here. Nothing seems to have been carried out

on the one hand in a mean and niggardly fashion, while on the other there is no evidence of extravagance or indifference to economy.

The gross rental, inclusive of that from small holdings and cottages, has been as follows since the beginning of the century :

		£			£
In the year 1800 it was		3,603	In the year 1850 it was		7,004
„ 1810 „		6,908	„ 1860 „		9,592
„ 1820 „		7,840	„ 1870 „		10,376
„ 1830 „		6,706	„ 1880 „		7,185
„ 1840 „		6,449	„ 1886 „		7,130

But it must be remarked that the rental of 1886 is not all actually received from a tenantry, but is the sum given on the basis of a valuation ; a large portion of the estate being in the hands of and cultivated by the owner.

The expenditure on the enclosure of one parish, the purchase of land, drainage, building, and repairs, or renewals, comes to no less than £143,798 as below.

	£
Farm premises, cost and repairs . . .	41,311
Cottage repairs between 1860 and 1885 . . .	4,564
Public drainage of fen, say . . .	3,000 *
Internal drainage of fen . . .	11,213
Highland drainage . . .	31,920
Road made . . .	2,190
Purchase of land . . .	44,089
Enclosure of one parish . . .	5,511
Total . . .	<u>£143,798</u>

The expenditure on residence, cottages, restoration of churches, special fen taxes, materials, and agency, brings up the capital sum expended to £218,446. Now, supposing this sum had, as it accumulated, been hoarded instead of expended on this estate, and was to be now brought to light and placed out at interest of 4 per cent., an income of no less than £8,738 a year would be the clear result, or £1,400 a year more than the present gross income of the whole improved estate in 1886, after adding to the rental of £7,130, £200 for the mansion, making in all £7,330.

* Raised by an annual tax, averaging £116 per annum, and extending over eighteen years.

Supposing, which is believed to be the case, the outlay in question has been spread over the eighty-six years of this century, the estate may be debited with an annual charge in respect of one half of £218,446 for eighty-six years, equal at 4 per cent. to £4,369 a year. Had this outlay never been made by the owner, it is not to be believed that the estate would have been unproductive. On the contrary, with security of tenure at a low rent, tenants would have been found to execute some improvements and renewals or repairs at their own cost. With a system of building leases even cottages might have been thus erected, as it is understood has been the case on one or more large estates. The owner might possibly have felt called upon to renew or rebuild the farm-houses, to execute the arterial drainage of the fen land, and to take upon himself the enclosure of the open field parish, the repair of the churches, and the finding of some material. The estate is included in five parishes, and consists of 141 acres wood, 4,557 acres arable, 1,589 acres pasture, 800 acres fen land under plough. The highland cost £6 an acre to under-drain, the tiles being made on the estate. The woodland produces no net return.

HOLKHAM ESTATE

The estate of the Earl of Leicester, K.G., at Holkham in Norfolk, furnishes another striking illustration in support of the contention that value is due to outlay, and that some of the most splendid exhibitions of fertility and agricultural wealth are traceable, not to natural circumstances, but rather to the continuous systematic applications of skill and of extraneous capital on the soil.

In the following statement the Park and Domain, with the mansion and buildings pertaining to it, are excluded ; as well as the Marsh farm of 459 acres.

The amount expended by the late Earl of Leicester		
on buildings and repairs from 1776 to 1842 was	£536,992	
By the present Earl of Leicester for buildings and		
repairs, gates and fences, and under-draining,		
from 1842 to April 1, 1883, was .	£344,994	} 490,218
For purchase of land	145,224	
Total		£1,027,210

	£
The net income of the Estate in 1841 was . . .	30,499
The average of ten years to 1841 was . . .	25,208
The net income in 1860 was . . .	26,746
The net income in 1882 was . . .	25,402
The net income in 1885 was . . .	27,523

It is interesting to examine, by the way, the payments which in the year 1882 came off the year's income of £52,285, amounting as they do to over one-half of this gross income. They were as follow :

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Land tax	1,410	2	7			
Property tax	1,183	0	10			
Out rents	4,879	10	5			
Parochial rates	279	4	1			
Tithe rent charge	6,481	3	0			
Voluntary payments	680	17	7			
				14,913	18	6
Buildings and repairs	8,836	4	6½			
Gates and fences	401	1	5½			
Under-draining	1,192	14	7			
Law charges	146	7	3			
Management	1,303	17	10			
Sundry disbursements	81	2	9			
				11,961	8	5
Total . . . say,	£26,875	0	0			
Net profit . . . say,	25,410	0	0			

The average cost from the year 1852 to the year 1883 has been annually—

	£	s.	d.
For buildings and repairs	8,083	6	0
Gates and fences	332	11	8
Under-draining	760	4	5
Total . . .	£9,176	2	1

The amount annually expended in buildings and repairs alone from Michaelmas 1815 to April 1868, a period of fifty-two years, was £8,371 18s. 3d.

Here we have an instance of an expenditure during 107 years of over one million sterling on one estate, in the purchase of land

and in work and payments necessary to insure this rental of £52,285. Applying the same rule as in the Connington case, and taking the interest of half this amount at 4 per cent. during the whole period, the proprietor from this source alone would have derived an annual income of £20,000, only £5,410 less than the net income of the improved and enlarged estate at the present time ; or if the owners had only hoarded the sums annually spent on the maintenance of their estate during the period under consideration, and had in the year 1883 brought the accumulation into beneficial use by investing it at the rate of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., the possessor would be in the enjoyment of an income of £36,000 a year. The estate, less the amount purchased, would also be his, not indeed in the high condition which now distinguishes it, but still we may conjecture productive of some, though a considerably less, rental.

Having now given some instances of the expenditure of a large sum per acre in the reclamation and improvement of land in the eastern and northern counties of England, another may be added of a more ordinary character in the south-west, where the expenditure in relation to the rental has not been so considerable, and where the execution of the improvements has not attracted such general attention from its novelty or its extent. It gives, therefore, perhaps in some respects a truer sketch of the operations which have for years been quietly carried on by English landowners in the ordinary management of their estates.

EARL BATHURST'S ESTATE

The property in question belongs to Earl Bathurst, who has kindly furnished the following particulars concerning it. The purely agricultural portion, occupied by tenant farmers, consists now of about 6,100 acres. In 1825 its extent was 4,920 acres ; nearly 1,200 acres have been subsequently added by purchase from time to time at a cost of over £40,000.

A home farm of 1,209 acres, on which about £3,000 has been expended on new buildings and cottages, besides further sums on annual repairs, is not included in this statement. All contributions and subscriptions to the restoration of churches and

vicarages, the maintenance of schools, the erection of a village coffee-tavern and similar matters, as well as the expenditure of £2,300 on a cattle-market upon the estate, producing an annual income of about £80 from tolls, are omitted here from consideration. A sum of £1,205 is, however, included in the outlay of 1877, which was spent in the construction of water-works for the supply of one village and some high-lying land on two farms.

With regard to the rental, this from 1851 to 1879 was based on the price of wheat, when in the latter year the tenants expressed a desire to revert to fixed payments. The rent received amounted, on 4,920 acres, in the year 1825, to £5,521; in 1830, to £5,519; in 1840, to £5,904; in 1850, to £6,143 on 5,290 acres; in 1860, to £7,678, the acreage being then 5,685 acres; in 1870, to £7,780; in 1880, on 6,100 acres, to £6,560, and in 1885 to £6,177 on the same acreage. The consideration of these figures is instructive, showing as they do that in 1825 the gross rent was 22s. 5³/₄d. per acre as against 20s. 3³/₄d. in 1885, notwithstanding the outlay of £12 per acre since that date. The gross sum expended on the property between 1825 and 1885 inclusive came to £67,438 on new farm-houses, buildings, cottages, general repairs, and draining, though only £1,867 is accounted for under this last head. As the cost of the purchased land, including law and other expenses, comes to about £42,500 there appears thus to have been a grand total of £110,000 spent on a property which produced in 1885 a net rent of only £4,600.

The interest on £110,000 at 4 per cent. is £4,400, showing that within the last sixty years Earl Bathurst and his predecessors have practically bought and paid for their own agricultural property in hard cash. In other words, if they had not laid out a shilling in repairs on these agricultural holdings during the last sixty years, and had not purchased additional agricultural property for the improvement of their estate, but had invested the money so laid out at 4 per cent., the present owner would have been able to let the original agricultural estate of 4,920 acres at one shilling an acre last year, and would be now actually in receipt of a larger return than he is possessed of under present circumstances.

It will be possibly urged that the cases quoted are exceptional, and not fair illustrations of the argument of the writer.

Those who advance this objection would do well to bear in mind the length of time which has been occupied in bringing this fair realm into the condition in which we now find it ; how impossible have been the operations without legislation ; how slow and costly legislative processes are ; how system after system has been abandoned and resumed under the influences of wars, treaties and commercial changes ; how sometimes the ignorant obstinacy of the wealthy or the popular prejudices of the masses have impeded or suspended remunerative operations ; how sometimes violence has been used to put an end to the efforts of the improvers ; and how the laws of real property, with their costly complications and the heavy demands of the exchequer, have closed the markets to those who might desire to realise on their improvements.

Let them bear in mind that the owner and cultivator of the soil has a fickle partner, from whom he can never divorce himself, in the person of Nature. Her whims and ways are beyond calculation. Mistress of such mighty agents as droughts, floods, frost, and heat, she too often makes a disastrous end of the best devised schemes for improvement. You can impose no restraint on her. You cannot command the temperature of a county as you would that of a cucumber-frame or a factory ; you cannot carry the sun in one hand and a watering-pot in the other. The most a prudent improver can do is to humbly provide for contingencies, to remember that at present there are no exact rules of science under which he can conquer this dour earth of ours ; and costly though it be, he must be content to do what, with no assurance of great reward, his ancestors have done before him—adopt those measures which many failures and much painful experience have shown to be of most service in the particular spot on which he applies his energies and resources.

Side by side with social progress the ameliorating changes have been advanced, not by the silent operations and development of Nature or by the natural increment of value, but by the dogged effort which the landowner as a rule has ever put forth in the making of the land, and at any cost fitting it for the practice of improved husbandry suited to the progress of civilisation and the modern wants of the people.

(October 1887.)

GRUNTY FEN

A more recent illustration is to be found in the recovery of 1,350 acres of land and swamp in a state of nature about 40 years ago, the inclosure award being dated December 19, 1861. The land in question was intercommonable of seven parishes, and its corporate existence would be found indicated in the map of Cambridgeshire under the extremely puzzling and unromantic title of Grunty Fen. It was a hollow surrounded on all sides by the low hills or "highgrounds," as they are called, of the seven interested parishes; it dipped to its lowest level towards the north, where was a tract of poor soil and pools for the most part swampy all the year round. Here was the natural gullet, formed by a dip in the high ground, through which the overflow of the stagnant water would discharge itself, but still leaving behind a depth sufficient to cover a very large portion of the fen beyond the extent of the peat earth. Almost [in the centre of the fen on its longer axis from east to west the surface rose a few feet, sufficiently high in places to escape flooding, but in winter time only to be reached by boat. Not a tree, not a shrub even of the meanest kind, broke the dreary monotony of its surface. Even the reeds were starved and not fine of their kind; only rushes and flags flourished at their best. Still at some early period it seems to have had attractions for our prehistoric forefathers.

On the surface, occasionally, a clean-cut, sharp, undamaged celt of the Neolithic period is picked up—and forty years ago a magnificent gold torque peeped through the turf. A farmer crossing the common at night, the moon shining, was attracted by something glittering in his way. On working it out with his knife it proved to be a gold torque in perfect condition, the metal of which was worth fifty pounds. Later on, the spot seems to have found favour in the sight of the Roman conquerors of the country, for on the elevated ridge, out of the reach of the flood water, they established a very considerable pottery, extending at intervals over a length of nearly a mile. Here the cultivator has brought to light the sites of several kilns, remains of the foreign red ware in use for patterns, or it may be domestic service, with several new names of potters not heretofore

recorded, hand mills either for grinding corn or paste for the finer description of ware, polishing stones and other materials of the craft. After their departure the tract must have been abandoned to a state of nature wholly unproductive and uncared for. Much of the surrounding land is of a good quality, some of it unusually good. On the summit of the low hills to the south, traces of early British sepulture are so marked as to lead to the conviction that some of the earliest settlements were formed there, attracted by fine springs of water and the rich fertile soil. Then followed the division of the surrounding belt into parishes with their manors and clusters of houses, seven parishes in all, immediately contiguous to the fen which then in time became intercommonable, that is, used by the commoners of the seven parishes, and then only for the grazing of their live stock and for a supply of fuel, peat out of northern lowest portions and "turves" (slow of combustion) off the drier pasture land.

The fowling and fishing were shared, no doubt, between the poacher and the proprietors of the right; the latter, however, down to the latest times, destroying the nets of the former and harrying the interloping gunners in their pursuit of wild-fowl. Any attempt to exercise so-called public rights—such as grazing cattle from a distance, taking fuel to "foreign" homesteads, burning ashes to put on land out of the interested parishes, or squatting, or even camping as gipsies do, on this wild but not "no man's" land tract—was promptly resented and resisted. In this state of nature, then, the whole fen or common remained until the middle of the fifteenth century, when the attention of the country was directed to the removal of the flood water drowning thousands of acres and rendering them uninhabitable and profitless. The main works were undertaken and carried out by the Earl of Bedford and his associates. As a reward for their costs and exertions, portions of the districts benefited (the Great Bedford Level) were allotted to "the adventurers," and as among other larger and vastly more important works was a drain or "cut" of some miles length from Grunty Fen to the River Ouse near Littleport, a rectangular allotment of 426 acres of the highest land in the centre of the 1,776 acres of the fen was enclosed and became freehold

land, but subject to a tax for the purpose of maintaining the works by which the great level of the fens had been rendered comparatively dry. A portion, however, of this 426 acres lay so low that the water had to be lifted out of it by a scoop wheel driven by a windmill.

Nothing more was done by way of relieving the fen from submersion until about the year 1838, when, in order to prevent the body of water poured into the fen from the slopes of the surrounding seven parishes from passing down the Bedford Level drain into Littleport parish, a catchwater drain or dyke was cut all round the fen at the foot of the slopes or rise, but at such a height as to allow of its discharging itself by gravitation into the river several miles above Ely and Littleport. This work, costing £2,500, of course indirectly benefited the fen, which thenceforward received no more water than what fell in rain on its own area. It was now a common, bright with water in winter in the pools, as they were called, in the north, but only dotted with watersplashes elsewhere. There were fewer reeds, flags, and rushes, but more thistles and ragweed. It was a paradise for goldfinches in the summer and fairly attractive for snipe in the winter. Great changes, however, had meanwhile been going on in the land that surrounded this fen. The seven parishes claiming rights on it had one after another, since the commencement of the century, been enclosed. Fine fields of grain and enclosures belted it in, and the contrast between the "made" land with its hedges, roads, farm premises, and labourers for ever busied on it, ploughing, sowing, mowing, reaping, and the dull sulky waste below with its stunted horses and uneasy cattle for ever shifting about in hungry search for a mouthful, was most striking. It had not the varied beauty of a wild Hertfordshire or Sussex common. No encroaching crops on the edge of it (this catchwater drain barred that), with the elder hedge round the cribbed garden, the white linen drying on it, the poultry at large, the children at play, the donkey flitted hard by; beyond, the patches of gorse and ling and the scattered ponds or pits where ducks and geese thrive and busy themselves in the most perfect health.

It was obvious that this "unmade" land could not remain in its state of nature, or rather of mauled nature, for this Bedford

Level drain and the catchwater drain between them had made the life of the pike precarious, and deprived the wild duck of a safe nesting-place and resort, but had left enough water to unfailingly rot the scabby sheep, and establish ague in the shepherd's home. There was to be another change, the great one; the one thousand three hundred and fifty acres were to undergo the expensive process of manufacture and be "made" land as the word is understood in old-inhabited and cultivated countries.

In order to effect this change it was necessary that all having a legal interest in the fen or common should be consulted, and that the majority should agree to the course to be adopted. The persons interested besides the owners of the 425 acres of adventurers' land were the commoners and the landowners of the seven parishes, and under action taken by outsiders the poor of these parishes, as well as the lords of manors, had also to have their claims, which did not come to much, taken into account. A short record of the proceedings has come down in writing from a landowner who, acting for himself and others, promoted the enclosure. It runs as follows:

In the autumn of the year 1857 I began to see what I could do towards the enclosure of Grunty Fen. It consisted (besides the four farms in the centre of it, comprising 425 acres allotted to the adventurers of the Bedford Level Corporation) of about 1,400 acres. Attempts and suggestions for its enclosure had been made during the past century, among others by Bentham the historian of Ely Cathedral, but they had always failed, and the enclosure had come to be looked upon as an impossibility. The fen was covered in places with anthills, and in summer with thistles which enticed large flocks of goldfinches. The portion under Witchford was swampy and was the abode of snipe, and there was rarely a day in the year on which some gunner was not in pursuit of them. The last day I ever shot on the unenclosed fen I killed thirteen couple. This portion also was dug up for "sods." No one seemed to know who had any legal rights on the fen; every one did what was right in his own mind on it. It was grazed to any amount, and people had in late years begun to dig it up and carry away the soil on to the adjoining lands. It had become a regular nuisance, and as it lay immediately under the new manor house which was built in 1847-48 I was determined the nuisance should cease. During the year 1857, therefore, I ferreted about in the records of the Court of Exchequer and in the Petty Bag Office, and ascertained what was the history of the other fens before they were enclosed. I ascertained what entries there were in the

Court Rolls of the different manors adjoining the fen in regard to it, and having mastered all the facts that I could gather I arrived at the conclusion that the fen in former times, centuries ago, was precisely in the same position as the other fens in the Isle of Ely, and was part of the wastes of the adjoining manors, and was in fact an inter-common.

Prospects were held out of a *pro rata* allotment to all the highlands in the parishes abutting on the fen with small common-right allotments to the houses. This secured the requisite number of assents (besides those of the lords of the manors), and an Act was obtained for the enclosure. In time a valuer was appointed to adjust the interests of those having a legal claim to participate in the division of the fen, to plan and lay out the lots, to make the public roads and watercourses, and to hand over the recovered acres to separate ownership and cultivation.

Six hundred and twenty chains, or seven miles and three quarters of public roads, 30 feet wide, metalled 12 feet wide with 3 inches of gravel on 7 inches of burnt ballast, were made. These cost, with the drains or dykes alongside them, and some other independent watercourses and outfall works, £6,286 11s. 2d.; the bridges and tunnels connected with these £424 3s. 8d. The valuer's remuneration at 16s. an acre on 1,350 acres came to £1,080. In addition to these the fencing and levelling the recreation allotments cost £61 14s. 2d. It will thus appear that it cost the landowners—many of them very small people—£8,452 9s. as well as a tax of £100 a year for the passage of the water to the River Cam, equal at 3 per cent. to a capital sum of £3,300, or £11,452 in all, to bring the fen out of its wild state up to its first stages of recovery.

If 50 acres be deducted for public roads and watercourses from the 1,350 acres of the fen, the remaining 1,300 acres had to bear this first cost, equal to a charge of £8 16s. per acre. Before, however, the allottees could bring their new possession into cultivation, the division fences had to be formed and gates put down. As planting, fencing, and rearing the quick-set hedges was done at the cost of about 1s. a yard, and there still remained the levelling of the surface, which was covered with holes and hillocks, the estimated total cost of these subsidiary operations would hardly come to less than 24s. an acre, bringing the cost up to £10 an acre before a ploughshare could be driven through the turf or a beast be turned out to graze. In order to render

a very large portion of the land fit for cultivation, under-draining remained to be done, costing in 1862 about £3 an acre, but at the present time nearly double that sum.

Some of the reclaimed land is certainly of a very fine quality, but a portion would not repay the cost of cultivation, and is still almost in a wild state, though encumbered with this heavy outlay.

The seven lords of the manors had allotted among them 23a. Or. 7p., and there was set for the poor of the seven parishes 24 acres in all of recreation ground, and no less than 237 acres of allotments subject to rent charges.

The crowning evidence of modern civilisation is seen in a railway bisecting the fen, with two stations on it, bringing London within a two and a quarter hours' run, and St. Ives market within a run of thirty-five minutes, of these stations.

It is to be hoped that the short history of the process and cost of "making" the land, entirely apart from the cultivation of it, may, with the other instances already given, help to demonstrate the fact that the farm land of England, before the cultivator or husbandman could turn a furrow or stock an acre, had first to undergo the process of manufacture at a large outlay of enterprise, money, and labour.

This the owner exclusively incurred and provided at his own cost and charges, and acting on lines distinctly special and antecedent to the cultivator's appearance on the scene. The latter then brought fresh capital and different methods into play, but not before the landowner had manufactured the artificial area to fit it for his productive operations.

ALBERT PELL.

Hazelbeeche, Northampton.

APPENDIX II

AN OUTDOOR RELIEF POLICY

The following letter summarises very clearly the nature of the reforms which Mr. Pell advocated in Poor Law administration :

To the Editor of THE CHARITY ORGANISATION REVIEW
[of June 1907]

SIR,—

The little union of Brixworth having in the past attained considerable fame as one in which outdoor relief had been gradually diminished almost to vanishing point, I think it may be of interest to your readers to see the steady growth of pauperism resulting from a change of system. It is particularly important to note that the number of outdoor paupers has had no effect in reducing the number indoors.

The policy of strict administration of the Poor Law, after being in force for many years in the Brixworth union, was reversed about twelve years ago. The last year of the old system and the last year of the present one have been chosen for comparison.

The advantages claimed for the outdoor relief policy are :—

1. *That it is more economical.*

Cost in the years ending Lady Day :

		In maintenance			Out Relief			Total
1895	£798	..	..	£140	..	.. £938
1907	£1,127	..	..	£1,160	..	.. £2,287

showing an increase of £1,349, or 150 per cent. Cost per head of population in the same years was : 1895, 1s. 6½d. ; 1907, 3s. 10d.

2. *That it diminishes the pressure on the workhouse.*

There were in the workhouse on :

	Indoor Paupers				
January 1, 1895	79
January 1, 1907	101

3. *That it is more humane to the aged poor, who are saved from the painful necessity of ending their lives in the workhouse.*

In the years ending Lady Day :

	Deaths in the work-house over 65			In the work-house on Lady Day			Total
1895	10*	..	38	..	48
1907	6	..	40	..	46

4. *That if carefully administered it does not greatly increase the pauperism.*

Including all ages, there were on January 1 :

	Indoor paupers				Outdoor				Total
1895	79	..	..	18	..	..	97
1907	101	..	..	176	..	..	277

showing an increase of 180, or nearly 200 per cent.

	Population			Paupers			Proportion of Paupers to Population
1895	12,186	..	97	..	1 in 126
1907	11,829	..	277	..	1 in 43

Yours faithfully,

MARY CALVERLEY.

BRAMPTON RECTORY,
NORTHAMPTON.

The only additional and incontrovertible statement of fact which the case requires is contained in the following comparative table, which shows the position of pauperism in the Brixworth union before, and after twenty-two years, during which the principles advocated by Mr. Pell were more or less closely followed.

		Number of Paupers		Cost of Relief	
		Indoor	Outdoor	Indoor	Outdoor
1872	..	64	1062	£505	£5,899
1894	..	80	20	£888	£151

* One of these was under order of removal, not being chargeable to the Union, but was too ill for the order to be carried out. The difference in the totals is therefore only 1.

Mrs. Calverley came to live in Brixworth in 1879, and shared very strongly the objections which were felt to Mr. Pell's strict system of administration. Experience has changed her view, as the above letter testifies. Mrs. Calverley has been a guardian since 1894.

The Brixworth board, in reply to the publication of these figures, has passed a resolution "That this board is convinced of the advantage of the out-relief policy, as being both more economical and more humane." This, though it is conclusive evidence as to the opinion of the board, does not alter the facts.

A similar policy adopted in St. George-in-the-East, the London parish in which Mr. Pell was interested, produced a very similar reduction. Here there has as yet been no return to the old lax system, but the continuity of policy is recognised as being very precarious and due entirely to the personal influence of one man.

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